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FROM

Prof James R. Lowell

Mary Staunton;

OR,

THE PUPILS OF MARVEL HALL.

MARY STAUNTON;

OR,

THE PUPILS OF MARVEL HALL.

BY THE AUTHOR

OF

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MARY STAUNTON;

OR,

THE PUPILS OF MARVEL HALL.

CHAPTER I.

It was the hour of recreation, or, more properly speaking, rest from study, at Marvel Hall, a fashionable boarding-school in the City of New York, and girls large and small were standing in the windows, like so many prisoners, envying the passers-by their freedom.

"Isabella Sinclair is coming!" exclaimed a dozen voices at once.—"I am so glad she has come back," whispered little Minnie Allen, timidly. "She is my favorite."—"*I* love her as well as you, and she loves *me*, I know," said Alice Stanley, a little creature who was climbing upon a high chair to look out of the window.—"Get out of my way, you little nuisance. I wish you little girls were in Halifax," screamed an ill-natured looking girl, pushing her way roughly through the crowd. Her eyes were red and swollen from crying. She held a slate covered with figures in one hand, and in the other a torn atlas, whose leaves were with difficulty kept together.—"Shame, Mary Staunton!"

muttered Ellen Maylor, "what harm do the little girls do you? They are not in your way. It is no reason you should be cross to these children because you missed your lessons to-day, and got put upon the Idlers' seat."

"Get out of the way, you disagreeable baby," repeated Mary, roughly, pushing little Alice off the chair. Her head fell against the leg of a large table that stood near the window. "There now; I suppose you are hurt," said Mary; "and I wouldn't wonder if you ran off and told Miss Knight that *I* hurt you! but you needn't do it, for I'll tell her it was no such thing; I never touched you;—I was leaning over you to see Bella Sinclair come up the walk, and the girls crowded me against your chair, and you fell. If you hadn't been so obstinate in staying here after I told you to get out of the way, you wouldn't have been hurt. There, stop crying; it is nothing after all; if it is, it was your own fault, remember. If Mrs. Marvel knew it, she would shut you up for not minding *me*."

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself," repeated Ellen Maylor; "she *is* badly hurt, and it was all *your* fault."

"You dare to repeat that, and if I don't tell what you told me yesterday," said Mary. At this moment a tall woman, with a thin figure, disagreeable countenance, and large frame, was walking up and down the study hall as monitress. She approached the group of girls who surrounded little Alice, and, with her brow contracted, inquired the cause of the noise and confusion. She seemed to strike terror into the hearts of the younger children, while the older ones assumed an expression of defiance in her presence. Little Alice trembled with fear when Miss Knight took her by the

arm and seated her upon the chair from which she had fallen, with so much harshness that her delicate little frame received a shock not soon forgotten.

"What *is* the matter with you?" said Miss Knight; "why is it that you can never be with the older girls without crying or getting hurt? It must be your own fault. Look at your dress, torn off the belt. What did I tell you about tearing your clothes? Now you must go to bed again. A few more such days as you have passed in the dormitory will cure you of tumbling around in everybody's way, and tearing your clothes to pieces."

"Please, Miss Knight, allow me to mend her dress, and do not send the little creature to bed. She was not to blame, I assure you." Mary Staunton gave Ellen Maylor a glance that was understood, but it did not silence the generous girl.

"She was not to blame," continued Ellen; "*Mary Staunton* pushed her off the chair, and see here, her head is bleeding badly. I think it is too bad to punish Alice when she is not to blame."

Miss Knight felt the justice of the remark, but the concluding part of the sentence just uttered by Ellen, brought the blood to her face for an instant. After a moment's silence she said, in a calm voice:

"*You* should think it too bad to punish Alice? Who gave you the authority to dictate to me?" (putting down Ellen's name in her book.) "I shall report your conduct to Mrs. Marvel."

Alice left the school-room with Miss Knight, weeping bitterly at the thought of the loneliness of the large sleeping hall in which she was to spend the rest of the day. They reached the dormitory.

"Now you see what a troublesome little girl gets

when she makes herself disagreeable," said Miss Knight, before whom Alice stood taking off her clothes in preparation for going to bed. The fall had occasioned a bruise on the side of her head, and from it a few drops of blood fell upon her neck and stained her linen. "Does your head pain you?" asked Miss Knight, gruffly.

"No, ma'am," replied little Alice, in the lowest possible whisper.

"Why do you cry, then?" asked Miss Knight.

"Because I want to see dear Isabella, and I do not like to come up here all alone."

"Isabella Sinclair! why you foolish child, do you suppose you are a companion for her? You don't like to come up here? Then you must not make so much trouble. Now get into bed, and don't let me hear a word more from you, or I'll lock the door when I go out."

"Oh, please, Miss Knight, do not," said Alice, trembling from fear. "I'll be very good, and not cry loud at all if you will leave the door open."

Miss Knight wet a sponge and wiped off the blood from her face, and told her to keep her handkerchief to the bruise a little while; and she hoped it would be a lesson to her to mind when she was spoken to another time.

"Will you leave the door *a little* open, Miss Knight? I am so much afraid in this large hall."

"No. If you are afraid, you must be cured of such foolish fears; and if you cry I will not only close but lock the door. So not another word from you. I've lost a half hour of my recreation time now."

Miss Knight closed the door, and little Alice listened to the sound of her retreating steps with a beating

heart, as if she thought all hope of safety died away with them. She covered her head to prevent the sound of her crying reaching the ear of the dreaded teacher.

It was summer, and the windows were open. She heard the happy voices of her playmates in the back yard below, and she wished she could be with them. Soon there was silence. Studies were resumed, and she knew she must now wait three hours before she could hear them at play again. Then tea hour would come; "Perhaps Miss Knight would allow her a cup of milk and water, and a piece of bread; then studies again for one hour, and then a half hour recreation; after which Miss Knight would read the Bible, and then the girls will all go to bed," thought Alice.

"But it is so long; oh dear, oh dear!" she sobbed. "I wish I was home with my dear mamma. How she would cry, if she knew I was shut up here! and what will dear Bella say? oh dear, oh dear!"

Alice cried till her little heart seemed ready to break, but she was far away from all her companions, and no one heard her. She fell asleep after becoming exhausted, and dreamed of frightful ogres who were taunting her with being a disagreeable little nuisance whom nobody loved, and who was always in somebody's way.

When she awoke the next morning, Mrs. Marvel and a physician stood over her. "Little Alice will tell me how she is," said the doctor.

"How is your head, my dear?" said Mrs. Marvel.

"Very well, ma'am," replied Alice, covering her face from shame.

"Alice will be a good girl, and tell me how she got sick," said the doctor.

"I am not sick," replied Alice.

"Don't be afraid of me, my dear," said the doctor; "tell me all about it, my child."

"I was naughty," said Alice, "and Miss Knight made me come up here alone to go to bed."

"What did you do that was naughty, my dear?" said Mrs. Marvel.

"I don't know, ma'am. Mary Staunton *said* I was naughty."

"How did you get this bruise?" asked the doctor.

"I fell off the chair, sir," said Alice, after a few moments' hesitation, not knowing in reality whether she fell or was pushed from the chair, so confused had she become, from the fear on her mind at the time of the occurrence.

"What did you eat for your supper last night?" asked the doctor.

"I had no supper."

"This sickness has been produced by the fall. The nervous excitement caused by the confinement of the child in this room alone, has been very injurious to her. Fasting under such circumstances was dangerous. It is an experiment you will never allow to be repeated, Mrs. Marvel, I trust. Don't see, for my part, why parents send children so young as this little creature away from their own roof. Must be to avoid the care of them. Many a fine constitution destroyed by it, disposition ruined, and heart corrupted. Where are the consciences of mothers who act in this manner? This child requires the most delicate care, and the most tender attentions. Her temperament is extremely sensitive and nervous. A flower of rare beauty, I can assure you, if not—

"Doctor," said Mrs. Marvel, drawing herself up to her full height, which was more than the ordinary size,

"are you aware that you are insinuating that I am not capable of cultivating the tender plants consigned to my care? I beg you will remember that I was offered a situation as Court Governess, which the folly of my youth tempted me to refuse. My marriage with Mr. Marvel was looked upon as a decided hit in the fashionable world, but proved to be a sad failure. To save myself from the degradation of poverty, I opened this establishment, and I think I may say without vanity, that *better dressed or more stylish young ladies are not seen in society* than those I send out finished from Marvel Hall."

Doctor Root turned around, and looked inquiringly at Mrs. Marvel a moment, and then repeated with emphasis:

"'Better dressed or more stylish!' What the d—l have school-girls to do with dress and style? I invariably avoid the acquaintance of a woman whose school-girl daughter I see decked in feathers and flummery, for I'm sure to lose my temper, and tell her what a fool she is making of the poor child. The Almighty gave brains to use, not abuse, and what kind of use can be made of a head full of such flimsy nonsense? Sawdust, dear Madam, sawdust would do as well as the brains in too many of our heads."

"In yours, perhaps, Doctor," said Mrs. Marvel; "but I know the value of mine too well to under-rate them. But you are a privileged character; like many other wise men, you take the liberty of being rude under a pretence of candor and singularity. What would you think of dieting this little girl a week, and reducing the fever that way? Her face seems flushed."

"Dieting! She requires the most nourishing food

and cheerful company. The child's nervous system has been taxed severely. Has she been home-sick?"

"I really can't say," replied Mrs. Marvel.

"Can't say!" repeated the doctor. "Is it possible you are at the head of this establishment, and do not know whether the youngest child committed to your care has been home-sick or unhappy? and to such care mothers commit their tender offspring! Oh, Heaven forgive them!" soliloquized the doctor.

"Do you suppose, sir, that I have nothing to do but watch the tears of these troublesome babies, half of whom I have not time to see once a day?" inquired Mrs. Marvel, annoyed by the doctor's interrogation.

"To whom can you intrust the care of them?"

"I consider that a question *you* have no right to ask; and please understand, Doctor Root, that in future your services are not required in this establishment. Doctor Blossom will be attendant family physician the coming year."

"As you please, Mrs. Marvel," replied Doctor Root, calmly. "I have done my duty. A physician who will not speak his mind candidly to his patients, or to those who have the care of them, is not a man worthy of the trust his high calling imposes upon him. I have spoken in good faith, and do not regret it." Mrs. Marvel, much offended, turned to leave the dormitory.

"Plase, ma'am," said Biddy, a rough-looking Irish girl, thrusting her head in the door, and speaking in a loud voice, "was it pays or banes you tould me to roast for the coffee? Here's the gruel, ma'am, you tould me to make for the child."

Bridget, receiving no answer from Mrs. Marvel, who was too engrossed to see or hear her, shuffled into the

room. It was with difficulty she kept her feet in her slip-shod shoes. Bridget stood before little Alice with a commiserating look for a moment, and then said:

"There's a darlint; try to ate a bit; but faith it's more than I could do myself, this minute, for the taste of the same turns my stomach, saving your presence. It's the nice oatmale that would give your heart courage, if you could get it; or a little whey. But, poor little craythur, you ought to have something better than this feedin' your getting."

The doctor had listened to Bridget, and could not help thinking that there was more sense in her head and goodness in her heart than the coarse exterior of her person gave reason to expect.

"What *is* that stuff you are offering the child?" said the doctor.

"Male stirabout, your honor," replied Bridget; "not as dainty as it might be, sure, I know, but that isn't here or there to me. If *I* was mistress, I wouldn't feed my cats with such ateing, for sure it would give the crathurs fits."

The doctor took the bowl from her hand, and finding the gruel was made of sour meal and water, without a moment's reflection he threw the bowl and its contents out of the window.

"You ought to follow it," said the doctor. "Are you the cook for this school, and make such gruel as that for a sick child! It is downright murder, a slow death, inflicted upon children, to give them food prepared by a stupid creature like you, who can't tell peas from beans; and you are employed as cook for two hundred children! You ought to be tried, and sentenced to ten years imprisonment."

"Is it for obeying orthers, I'd be thrated like a felon or a deserther. The missus knew the male was sour; sure, it was not my fault. Doctor, you wouldn't be angry with a poor crathur, who has not a home to go to this minute, if she was turned out. Plase, sir, here is the missus coming," said Bridget, in a familiar whisper, "don't spake of the stirabout, for your life, sir."

Mrs. Marvel re-entered the room, holding a piece of paper in her hand, upon which she had written out the number of visits the doctor had paid during the past term.

"What business have you here, Bridget?" muttered Mrs. Marvel, in a cross tone.

"Sure, me'm, didn't I come to ask was it pays or banes I'm to roast for the coffee? If it's banes, there's no more in the bag."

Mrs. Marvel was in a dilemma. To give the order would tell the secret of her economy; and to allow Bridget to go to the kitchen without it, would be sure to give her trouble.

The door bell rang, and Mrs. Marvel waved her hand to Bridget to leave the room.

"This child is very much in need of nourishment, Mrs. Marvel. A little beef-tea must be made at once for her, or you may expect a nervous fever," said the doctor. "It is evident that she has been suffering from debility longer than you have supposed. Good diet, cheerful company, quiet, and riding out occasionally, will soon restore my little patient to perfect health; but without these, I would fear that in years to come she may suffer for this want of care."

Mrs. Marvel looked steadily at Doctor Root a few moments, to see if he were really in earnest; and then throwing back her head, and assuming a theatrical tone

and manner, asked him, if he really supposed she could afford to make herself such a slave as that to her pupils.

"If you cannot take care of them as their parents would do, madam, you have no right to assume the responsibility of guardian."

"You talk like a simpleton, Doctor," replied Mrs. Marvel. "Do you suppose it ever enters into the minds of the parents of these children that I should watch them *individually?* It is done in *classes*, sir; systematic *classes*. They walk in classes, study in classes, recite in classes."

"And how do you cultivate the different dispositions in classes?" interrupted the doctor.

"General rules are given, which if the young ladies do not follow, the loss is theirs."

Little Alice had been listening attentively, although she understood but little that Doctor Root had said. She could not help wishing she could go with him, and thinking how much she would love him, he spoke so kindly, and smoothed down her hair so gently.

Just then a young girl came bounding into the room, whose face beamed with goodness. Seeing the doctor and Mrs. Marvel in grave conversation, she bowed to them, and apologized for the intrusion, and was withdrawing, mortified at her thoughtlessness in coming in so boisterously.

"Come in, Isabella," said Mrs. Marvel. "Come in, my dear. Miss Sinclair," said Mrs. Marvel, introducing Isabella to Doctor Root. "There is one of my pupils of the first class, and one whom I am not afraid to introduce to the most fashionable circles."

"Ah, indeed," replied the doctor.

Isabella blushed, feeling the impropriety of the praise bestowed in her presence.

She went to the bedside of little Alice, who leaned towards her, and throwing her arms around her neck, hugged her tightly, alternately laughing and crying from joy.

"May I love you? Am I a troublesome little girl *to you?* Do you love me, Bella?" were questions asked rapidly, and with an earnestness that showed that the little creature's heart was full of fear of losing Bella's love, and that to retain it was necessary to her happiness.

Isabella was surprised at these questions, not having heard the story of her fall from the chair and her punishment for it. She paused a moment, endeavoring to divine the cause of this sudden outburst of feeling, which her little pet Alice showed.

Isabella unclasped her little hands, which were firmly locked around her neck, and forced her back upon the pillow from which she had risen. Then throwing back her own chestnut curls, which fell in profusion around her neck, she kissed her again and again, before saying, in a low tone:

"My dear little Ally, you seem tired, and your little eyes look as if you had cried a week. What made you sick, my pet?"

Mrs. Marvel stood at the door of the dormitory, parting with Doctor Root, who was folding, and rolling, and folding again a piece of paper which he held in his hand, while he listened to the "regrets" and excuses for his dismissal. The doctor had, in his retreat, forgotten his hat, (not an unusual occurrence,) and returned to take it from the table which stood near Alice's bedside.

Mrs. Marvel hearing Isabella's question of "what made Alice sick," took her arm, and drew her from the child. "Alice was a very obstinate, naughty girl," said she. "To her bad temper she must impute a fall, from which she suffered a little last night, but I believe she is now nearly well. Miss Knight was obliged to send her to bed for her troublesome and disagreeable manner to the older young ladies, and like a bad child, she cried herself sick; and now Miss Sinclair, to punish her for such conduct, of which I am sure you disapprove, you must not speak to her during the coming week."

Alice burst into an immoderate fit of crying, and held to Isabella's dress, begging her to say, "that she would love her when she would be good again." Isabella dared not reply after Mrs. Marvel's orders, but looked so tenderly into little Alice's face, while tears streamed from her own eyes, that even the child could read their loving kindness.

"Leave her," said Mrs. Marvel sternly, seeing the child still holding Isabella's dress, and earnestly appealing for a reply to her question. Mrs. Marvel seized the little hand roughly, and forced the dress from her grasp.

Isabella left the room, and Alice sank back upon the pillow, more pale and exhausted than before.

Mrs. Marvel looked triumphantly at the doctor, who stood holding his hat with his hands clasped, and was gazing upon the scene as solemnly as if in consultation over a puzzling case.

"What do you think now, Doctor," said Mrs. Marvel, smiling with complacency and excitement. "What do you think of her obstinacy and temper now? Was not *that* a struggle? But I conquered, as I must always do. It required all my force to pull her

away from the dress. Have I not metal to curb there?"

The doctor made no reply, but was gazing upon the delicate features, and fairy form of the lovely little creature before him, whose sensitive temperament had been, he feared, seriously injured by want of care and kindness. At length he said, in a gruff tone, "How long has this child been under your care, Madam?"

"Two years," replied Mrs. Marvel, "and not yet brought under subjection. Her mother is very delicate, and has been long in a decline. Her death is expected daily."

Alice, who till then had not seemed to hear any thing since Isabella left the room, turned her large deep blue eyes towards Mrs. Marvel, and listened with earnest interest.

"This little girl," she continued, "became troublesome to the servants, I suppose. At all events, her father brought her here, and entreated me to take care of her. He said he cared very little for her improvement in her lessons, but that she required moral training. Seeing my circular, he felt convinced my guardianship would be that which a mother would give. 'Indeed,' said he, confidentially—it was a strictly private remark, therefore, Doctor, I beg you will not repeat it—'Indeed, her mother, if well, would not be capable of giving her the education, physical and moral, which I desire for my child, who is my hope and pride!' Poor man, I fear his hopes will never be realized. The scene you have witnessed this morning will give you some idea of the labor imposed upon me. Money, Doctor, cannot compensate for the pillow upon which I lay my head."

"I should think not," replied the doctor, in a tone of irony, scanning Mrs. Marvel from head to foot.

"What say you of the character of such a child?" said Mrs. Marvel, encouraged by the doctor's reply.

"A great deal of nerve and depth of feeling; a determination of purpose, with uncommon powers of endurance," replied the doctor slowly.

"You are right," said Mrs. Marvel, tossing her head, and pointing her thin long finger at Alice. "I would not be surprised if she held out a week in her fit of obstinacy."

The doctor felt deeply the unfortunate position in which the child was placed, but it would not do for him to interfere further in the matter. Going to the bedside, he took the hand which lay upon the spread, and held it a moment without speaking; then, shaking it heartily, he laughed and said, "Pick up, pick up, my little bird; be a good child, and I'll send my little Annie to play with you, one of these days." Alice looked pleased. A faint smile stole over her face, and she said, in a very low tone, afraid to speak aloud before Mrs. Marvel: "Thank you, sir; I'll try to be good; when will Annie come?"

"When you are a better girl," interrupted Mrs. Marvel. "It would not do to let Annie Root play with a bad child." Alice from shame slowly withdrew her hand from the doctor's grasp, and felt mortified that he should know how bad she was.

"Order beef-tea at once for this child," said the doctor, "and I beg she may not be excited by too much talking. I assure you it is necessary to restore her to a cheerful state of mind. Good morning, my dear," said he to Alice, and left the house.

Little Alice heard the front door close, and again

she was alone in the large lonely dormitory, which was filled with rows of single beds.

When Isabella left Alice without replying to her last question, her heart was too full of pity for the poor child's trouble, to allow her to return with a light heart to the gay set of girls she had left, surrounding her open trunk, which was undergoing a severe inspection. A half-hour was allowed at ten o'clock for "middle-day," as the children called pieces of bread piled up in uninviting tin bread-baskets, prepared by Bridget's own hands! The "first class girls" had, according to appointment, collected in the attic, in which the trunks of the establishment were kept. This dark gloomy place might have been made more cheerful by the light of a window at either end of the attic, but for the dust of years upon the panes. The crevices in the roof admitted the sunlight, which looked at mid-day like red eyes, which were peering upon naughty little children, when they went to their trunks without permission; so said Mary Staunton if she caught any of them there.

Isabella had found a tiny china doll in her trunk, and hearing of Alice's illness, she excused herself to the girls for a moment to take it to her; but soon returned to her companions with a disappointed expression, and kneeling before the trunk without a remark upon Alice's troubles, began mechanically putting in the laces, dresses, boxes, and candies which the girls had taken out and inspected in her absence. "What a love of a dress!" "divine perfume!" "angelic pair of satin shoes!" were eulogies bestowed upon this and that article; but Isabella did not hear them. Her thoughts were with the little creature who had been so cruelly repulsed.

There was but one grave face in the group, but one

sullen brow. Mary Staunton tried to choke down her bitter envy, but she could not conceal it.

"Do you intend to make a show of yourself at our concert, in that blue dress, Isabella? I wouldn't be seen in such a thing as that," said Mary, tossing up a lace cape in the air, on the end of a fan she had in her hand.

"No, I suppose you wouldn't," replied Ellen Maylor, "because you couldn't get such a one, to save your life."

"Couldn't I, Miss? Who made you so wise, Miss Prim? I'd like to know who you are? If I couldn't buy a point lace cape, my grandfather was not a tailor, nor my mother in the lunatic asylum."

"Oh, fie!"—"Shame, Mary!"—"That is too cruel!"—was called out by several voices; and Mary would gladly have taken back the last taunt she had uttered; but it was too late; it was said, and *she* would not make an apology.

Ellen rose from her seat on the floor, and left the attic.

No one spoke until she had closed the door.

"Why did you say that, Mary?" said Isabella.

"Because it is true. It is no harm to tell the truth. But I believe Ellen did not know it before. There *was* a great mystery always about her mother before her; so I heard Mrs. Marvel say; and she could never tell where her mother went, though they say she had a suspicion. I'm sorry I said it; for I'm afraid it will come to Mrs. Marvel's ears, and she would half kill me. If one of you dare tell of me, I'll revenge it, depend upon it."

"What a strange girl you are, Mary!" said Victoria Hans, a fair-haired German girl, who had recently come to the hall.

"Who wouldn't be strange, leading the dog life I lead here," said Mary, sulkily. "My father placed me here when I was very young; I remember I wore a black stuff dress, and it was not because I was poor, for my father was very rich. I had my trunk full of beautiful lace, and silk and satin dresses, but I suppose I looked better in a black one. My father said he was going to the East. My father was a sailor, or a captain, or something of that sort, and he gave me to Mrs. Marvel till he would come back."

"And you never saw him since?" inquired Victoria.

"No," replied Mary, "but he put a bag of money in Mrs. Marvel's hands, I remember, as big as—" here she paused, and looked all around, to see a bag as large as she wished to describe, "as large as that bandbox, or nearly," she added, remarking the look of astonishment in the faces around her. "When my father was out of sight, I cried very hard, and Mrs. Marvel tried to make me stop; but I wouldn't. I believe I was ten years old before I was allowed to study more than an hour a day; for I was kept working all the time for Mrs. Marvel. Then Mrs. Marvel received a letter from my father, and since then she has tried to make something of me. But I wouldn't *be* any thing. I want my father to see how I have been treated."

"If your father left *so much* money for you, why are you so poorly dressed all the time?" said Isabella.

"Because Mrs. Marvel has used my money," said Mary.

"I don't believe that. I heard a very different story from Mrs. Marvel," said a quiet girl, who till now had taken no part in the conversation.

"You don't believe it? I lie, then, do I, Susan

Summers?" said Mary, her lip quivering with anger.

"I lie, do I? Take that," (giving her a blow on the cheek,) "and then run and tell Mrs. Marvel, and I'll tell her that I have brought letters for you more than a month from Willie Sutherland. And, girls! it is all planned that Sue and he are to run away concert night. What do you think of that?" Susan blushed; and Mary laughed loudly, at the embarrassment she had caused.

"Now, tell of me, or tell me I lie, will you?"

Isabella felt uncomfortable in the society of this coarse, unfortunate, ill-bred girl, who was, in fact, the girls believed, only a neglected charity scholar, whom Mrs. Marvel had so far trained. But like the other girls of the first class, Isabella was afraid of her, and endeavored to keep on the right side with her.

"I suppose Alice Stanley told you *I* pushed her off the chair and hurt her, and then complained of her to Miss Knight?" said Mary to Isabella.

"No, she did not!" replied Isabella.

"Well, it is well she didn't, or I'd owe *her* a grudge. I hate the sight of that child, any how."

"Why do you?" said Isabella. "She is one of the sweetest little creatures in the world. Who could dislike her?"

"*I* do. I hate any one who is so meek and submissive. Then she is so handsome, and conceited, and every stranger makes so much of her. Who ever said a soft word to me? Strangers look at me with such a cold look. If I was a hyena going to devour them, they could not say more than, 'What a creature!' and when they look at me, I always fancy they think, 'What a creature!' I cannot help my weak red eyes, or my

big mouth, or my rough skin, and big hands. I guess if you had done all the work I had given me to do, you would not have such little soft hands, Isabella." Mary caught Isabella's hand and squeezed it till she left the print of her own hard palm upon it, and tossed it away, saying:

"I hate white hands!"

How long she would have rattled on is uncertain, had not the sound of the bell made them all start. Isabella gathered up her clothes, and hurriedly threw them into her trunk. A second bell could be no longer unanswered. There was no more time for the inspection of Isabella's finery, and the girls ran from their hiding-place, where they had indulged in this stolen pleasure.

"You know, girls," said Mary, "that it is positively forbidden to come to the trunk-room."

"I had permission," replied Isabella.

"No one fancied Miss Propriety would do any thing wrong," said Mary; "but the rest of you had not, my word for it; and if you tell what I said to Ellen Maylor, I'll let the whole story out."

Mary's defiant tone and expression gave them reason to believe that the threat would be put in execution if need be.

Passing the children's dormitory, Mary thrust her head in the half-open door, and saw Alice in bed and alone. She crept slyly to the bedside. Alice had fallen asleep after Mrs. Marvel and Doctor Root had left the room, and she looked angelic in her quiet slumber. It was evident, from the placid expression upon her face, that pleasant dreams had succeeded those of terror which had disturbed her the previous night.

Mary gazed at her a moment, and then seized her

arm and pinched it, leaving the mark of her fingers upon it. The child awoke. Mary stood leaning directly over her, grinning hideously at her, and running out her tongue to an unnatural length.

Alice opened her eyes wide, in wonder, and in breathless terror stared a few moments at the unknown monster before her, and then shrieked for help.

Mary fled from the room, and was seated by her desk in the school-room in less than a minute.

Biddy was going through the basement hall with a pan of hot drippings, which she had saved for pie-crusts, when she heard the shrieks, which her imagination in a second converted into "fire! fire!" She let the pan drop, spilling the hot fat over her dirty clothes, and ran screaming, at the top of her voice, "FIRE! FIRE!"

As if by one simultaneous convulsive effort, the children rose in a body, and ran screaming in every direction, throwing down tables, chairs, benches, and inkstands, flower-pots, every thing which impeded their way.

Mrs. Marvel ascertained that it was a false alarm, closed the door, and placed a chair against it, upon which she stood and tried to make herself heard. But she opened her mouth and shut it in vain. Not a sound seemed to come from it, so deafening were the cries and lamentations around her.

Wearied at last, and seeing no appearance of "fire," the girls became quiet. Bridget issued from the kitchen wiping her face with her apron, which was covered with grease, but the poor creature was all unconscious of the grotesque figure she had made of herself.

Quiet again restored, some one remembered Alice; and Mrs. Marvel went to the dormitory to see if she was sleeping, as she supposed she would do if left en-

tirely alone. To her surprise and consternation, she found Alice in spasms, her eyes turned upwards in a fixed gaze.

Mrs. Marvel, as was usual on trying occasions, fainted; and Miss Knight, who had followed her, called for help.

The dormitory door was closed, and two or three of the junior teachers, who had come to her aid, loosened Mrs. Marvel's dress and laid her upon the bed.

Her fainting was nervous affectation; the color returned to her face, and she was soon restored.

Little Alice was raised from the pillow, but showed no signs of returning consciousness until placed in a warm bath.

She then drew a long breath, and lay listlessly upon the arm of Miss Waters, who held her, watching every motion and change of expression. Ether was applied by Dr. Blossom's order, who lived close by, and had come in on the first alarm of fire, to offer assistance.

An hour passed before Alice was sufficiently restored to be considered out of danger. Mrs. Marvel had gone to her room, to avoid, she said, the nervous excitement a child in spasms would cause her; and the Doctor left, to pay visits at a distance.

Miss Waters gave her class to one of the older girls, and took her seat by Alice, to take care of her during the afternoon and evening. The school girls were in groups, relating their exaggerated imaginations, but were now ordered to say no more of the alarm, which no doubt was the cause of Alice Stanley's illness, and they were told if the child should die they might blame themselves.

It was found impossible to control the girls suffi-

ciently to hear lessons; the excitement which the alarm had caused made them talkative and unruly, and it was proposed to Mrs. Marvel, by one of the senior teachers, to give out an order that classes should be dismissed for the day.

The large bell was rung, and Mrs. Marvel entered the school-room, looking around her from side to side until she had scanned every figure. She clasped her hands, and dropped her head a little, her usual custom before delivering a lecture. She then descanted solemnly upon the impropriety and evil consequences of rash and impulsive acts, like the one which had caused so much trouble but an hour before, and demanded a confession from the one present who had given the *first* alarm; and begged a full explanation of the whole affair.

A hum of voices was heard, until it swelled into loud talking; denials, strong asseverations, and conjectures. Probable and improbable causes were assigned, until Mrs. Marvel was deafened by the sound, and in an imperious tone called aloud, "SILENCE!" She then told the girls that there would be no more classes for the rest of the day. A general burst of exultation followed this announcement. "Where is Ellen Maylor?" said Miss Knight, looking around for her class, and remarking that all were present except Ellen. A look of inquiry, followed by one of surprise, ran through the assembly of girls, but no one answered. "*Where* and *when* was she seen last?" inquired Miss Knight. No one replied. "Is *any one* present who remembers to have seen her this morning?"

"I do," said Isabella.

"When and where?" questioned Miss Knight.

"She was in the attic with me," replied Isabella.

Just then a jerk of her dress surprised her, and turning round suddenly, she encountered the warm breath of Mary Staunton, who whispered in her ear: "I *dare you* to tell of me."

"When did you part with her?" said Miss Knight. Isabella replied:

"In the attic, soon after I left little Alice. But I do not know where she went."

"Why did she leave you? How did she appear when she left?" Another jerk reminded Isabella of her danger. She hesitated, grew embarrassed, and after drawing a long breath to gather courage, she related why Ellen had left the company of the girls.

Mrs. Marvel walked slowly over to Mary Staunton, and taking her hand dragged her out of the room, for she obstinately refused to move except by force. Half crouched to the floor, she slid along on her feet, endeavoring to twist her hand from Mrs. Marvel's grasp. But Mrs. Marvel's muscular frame could bear more than that struggle without difficulty.

"Oh, Isabella!"—"How dared you?"—"I would not be you!"—were whispered on every side. Isabella replied: "I'll never tell a lie. I'm not afraid of the truth. I was questioned and could not help it." In the midst of the inquiry Ellen came in, with her bonnet and shawl on, as calmly as if nothing had occurred, and asked: "What is the matter?"

"Where were you?"—"Where have you been?"—were asked by a dozen girls, who crowded around her. Ellen explained, in a few words, that passing through the hall after she left the attic she met Doctor Root, who said he would take the liberty of asking her to ride a little way with him, for he had received a letter from her father, in which he had commissioned him

to call and see her, and speak to her on family affairs at home.

"I hesitated a moment," said Ellen, "but the doctor said: 'Come, jump into my carriage; I have a call to make, and will take you with me if you will put on your bonnet quickly. If you do not see Mrs. Marvel, I will make it all right; come along. We will soon return again:' and so I went with him."

The girls began to disperse. Some went to the garden grounds to indulge in what they called "a good talk," under the big elm trees. A few concealed themselves in the high lilac bushes to study their lessons for the following day. The little ones ran off to their dolls and play-houses, wishing the day could be weeks long; and one declared "*she* wished it could be holiday every day till they all died!"

Mrs. Marvel called one of the laundry maids, who was passing in the hall, to assist her to hold Mary after she left the school-room, and the rebellious scholar was locked up in a dark closet, only ventilated by a small window over the door, for her bad behavior generally, Mrs. Marvel told her, and for relating to Ellen Maylor the painful secret of her mother's derangement, which had been confided to Mrs. Marvel alone, but which Mary had overheard.

Solitude, so far from benefiting her, only added bitterness to her depraved nature; and every hour she grew stronger in her angry determination against Mrs. Marvel—Isabella—Ellen—Alice—indeed, against the world; and her brain grew dizzy planning vengeance.

It was late at night; the house was still. The doors were barred and bolted, and, except Bridget, the servants were asleep, including a little colored boy of all work, who lay upon a pile of clothes in one corner

of the kitchen. Bridget had been told to take Mary's supper to her after the tea was over in the dining hall; but she had forgotten it. "Oh dear! what a stupid crathur I am! here is the poor dear's supper all this time." She snatched it up, took the key which Mrs. Marvel had given her, out of her pocket, and hurried to the closet. Opening the door, she found Mary seated on the floor, soundly sleeping with her head on a chair.

"And is this the prison the ladies are shut up in when they disobey orthers," thought Bridget. "I wouldn't object to the quiet ase myself a while. I wonther what I'd have to do to get here?"

While Bridget stood over her soliloquizing, Mary awoke, and her first impulse was to strike her.

"Is it your best friend, Miss, you'd turn against? Sure haven't I come to ax pardon for keeping your supper waiting so long on the hearth within; but if I did, isn't here a fine apple I stole from the panthry for you!"

Mary rubbed her eyes, which were half blinded by the flickering light in Bridget's hand.

"What have you got?" muttered Mary sulkily, taking the plate from her, and stretching out her feet to form a table of her lap.

"What have you done, Miss, to be kept so quiet and asy here?" asked Bridget, looking round the little prison.

"I struck Ellen Maylor, and told what I heard Mrs. Marvel say in her room," replied Mary, satisfying her hunger by swallowing down voraciously large bits of cold codfish and potatoes that had been added to her tea in consideration of the loss of her dinner.

"That was bad enough; I couldn't do that," replied Bridget thoughtfully. "But I don't know but I'd enjoy

a day or two here; it seems to me as if I will die if I stay much longer in that dirty dark place out there. It wasn't what I was born to, Miss."

Mary looked up inquiringly, but was too busily engaged to talk. Bridget understanding the look, replied:

"It was the nice green sod, the fresh air, and the potato field I was born to. And it is the stacking you'd like to see me doing, Miss; but the smoke of the kitchen blinds me, and breaks my heart entirely. Don't be laving any, Miss, on the plate; sure you ought to be hungry. The Missis would be angry if she knew I left you so long, for sure she tould me to bring you this three hours ago."

"Mrs. Marvel wouldn't care if I starved," said Mary, "and I wish I could."

"Oh the Blessed Virgin pray for you, poor crathur; don't fly in the face of Heaven that way, Miss. It's for your good that she punishes you, and why not bear it like a Christian?"

"What did the girls say, Bridget, when I was locked up?"

Bridget paused, thought a moment, pulled off a thief from the tallow candle she had taken up from the floor, and said:

"They made the greatest lamenting you ever seen, Miss. Sure there wasn't a dhry eye at the table; and the Missis, too, couldn't spake when she gave me the thay, and said, 'Bridget, see that the crathur gets that directly.'"

Poor Bridget's charity had stimulated her imagination! Little like the truth as her story seemed, Mary could not help thanking her for it. To see, even in imagination, a large school in tears for *her*, was more

than Mary could have pictured, and it was pleasant to dwell upon.

"Do you know, Bridget," said Mary, "whether Ellen Maylor was found?"

"Oh yes, Miss, sure it was with the old doother she went. What a sweet crathur she is." Bridget's candle was almost burned out, and she was obliged to leave Mary, and lock the door after her.

The following morning Mary was released from her imprisonment, and was lectured by Mrs. Marvel; after which she went sulkily about the house for several days, missing her lessons, and making herself as disagreeable as she dared to be to everybody.

CHAPTER II.

Dr. Blossom came the next morning to see little Alice. The dormitory was not quite in readiness, and he was asked to wait a few moments in the parlor. Going to the glass he arranged his hair and moustache, and drew out from his pocket a perfumed handkerchief, which he unfolded and placed in a side pocket in his vest after wiping his eye-glass, which he was obliged to wear, at least so said the charitably disposed.

Dr. Blossom's visits at the Hall, which had been occasionally made during Doctor Root's attendance, had always caused a commotion amongst the young ladies. If he came in recreation hour, heads were seen over the banisters, and in every open door, singly and in groups; while the little girls modestly slid away out of sight in corners till he passed.

The young doctor walked as demurely and with as little concern through the house as if he were no more than a daguerreotype that had walked out of a gilt case. This indifference increased the desire amongst the girls to be noticed by him, of which he was fully aware; he had more than once bowed to Isabella Sinclair, but this was the only exception to his general rule of gravity of demeanor. Many envied her the privilege of returning *such* a compliment. The sentimentally inclined of the young ladies often made Dr. Blos-

som the subject of conversation when gathered in secluded corners; some of the older girls confessing that they were dying in love with him: but the presence of Isabella Sinclair always silenced them on that topic. There was something in her demeanor which showed them that such conversation was distasteful to her. Her sweet and engaging manner had made her a general favorite, towards whom no envy was felt. Even poor Mary Staunton was softened in her nature when she approached Isabella, and when in good humor, she sometimes threw her arms around Isabella's neck, and gave her a most bear-like hug, which was borne with great gentleness, although very disagreeable to her.

"Alice has passed the night without any pain," said Miss Waters to the doctor when he entered the dormitory. "A little restlessness was all I observed. I have remained with her, according to Mrs. Marvel's orders, during the night."

"I see no reason to fear any danger," said Dr. Blossom, who was drawing off a light kid glove very slowly. Taking out his handkerchief, he shook it in the air, wiped his moustache, and placed it in the side pocket of his vest, leaving a corner out. This done, he gazed steadily at Alice a moment with most professional solemnity, felt her pulse, and seated himself near the bedside. It was his manner with his patients on all occasions, and so habitual was it, that to a lover of the natural, it was exceedingly disagreeable after a few repetitions. "It is too studied to be agreeable," said Isabella, when asked if she did not admire Dr. Blossom's dignity in the sick-room. "I prefer the hearty bluntness of Dr. Root."

Mrs. Marvel, dressed in a full and well-fitting silk morning wrapper, sailed into the dormitory and gave

a nod of approbation to Dr. Blossom, who bowed obsequiously in return, and hoped *Madame* had not been injured by the trying events of the preceding day.

Dr. Blossom always addressed Mrs. Marvel as *Madame*, and this she considered a mark of superior respect for her great worth. Ordinary teachers and heads of "Establishments" were only entitled to "MRS.;" but she, if not a "MADAME," was as good as a "MADAME." It had been a subject of serious reflection whether she would not change her circulars, and call herself MADAME MARVEL. The sound of "Madame" on this morning was sweeter than ever to her ears. The shock her self-love had received from the honest cross-examination which Dr. Root had given her, had subdued her a little, and made the appreciation of Dr. Blossom more grateful. She smiled and replied:

"You are very kind; I feel no ill effects except a languor which is depressing to my spirits."

"One born to adorn society," said the doctor, "as I may say without flattery you were, must find it very difficult to sustain herself in a position like yours, Madame, where a sensitive nature will meet with many trials."

Mrs. Marvel put the corner of her pocket-handkerchief to the corner of her eye, and shook her head slowly.

Dr. Blossom asked pardon for causing her so much pain, and began a dissertation upon the causes and effects of mental depression, and the importance of an early attention to physical developments; all of which might have been very interesting, and might have appeared disinterested on the part of the doctor, had he not concluded his long dull speech, spoken in a monotonous drawl, by proposing to "Madame" to form a

class in her 'establishment'" (he always said establish ment) "for the study of *Physiology*, *Pathology*, and *Therapeutics*."

"I would say with the immortal Robertson T. P.," continued the doctor, "teach your pupils the art of cogitating philosophy in the closet of intellectual fancy. Even after the revival of learning from the dark ages, the meteor light which gleamed from the works of Aristotle became the guide of schools, until the telescopic genius of Galileo showed by the sunlight of facts, that those hypothetical creations were more false than the mirage of the desert—until the giant mind of Bacon, the philosopher of philosophers, had taught the world the conclusive methods of inductive reasoning." Miss Waters raised her head a moment, and glanced at Mrs. Marvel to see the effect of this powerful effort, and strove in vain to overcome her disposition to immoderate laughter.

Mrs. Marvel's eyebrows were elevated. An occasional nod of assent, when Doctor Blossom paused a little, was all she ventured as a comment or remark on so profoundly deep a course of reasoning, for she felt it to be quite beyond her depth. Perhaps her pupils, she thought, who were young and could learn easily, would understand it, and she would certainly form the class.

When the speech was ended Doctor Blossom took out his handkerchief, wiped his moustache, and returned it to its abiding place, slowly drew on his gloves, and arose to depart, *his professional visit having been paid.*

"Quiet will soon restore the infantile elasticity, Miss Waters," said Doctor Blossom, waving his hand and bowing a good morning to her and to *Madame*.

"What a simpleton!" came involuntarily to her lips, which, although spoken in the lowest whisper,

reached Mrs. Marvel's ears, who turned suddenly around and replied to the remark by a most searching look. Then going to her ledger, she charged the visit to Alice's account.

"If quiet is necessary to her recovery," said Miss Waters, "what would you think of removing her to the little room at the end of the lower hall near the parlor, Mrs. Marvel? The noise is very great here in recreation time; and last night just as she had closed her eyes after three hours of restless turning from side to side, the little girls came to bed and awoke her."

"Very well," replied Mrs. Marvel, "I will order that room prepared, and I must let Mary Staunton leave off her lessons a few days, and take care of her. It won't do for you to lose your time any longer with her."

Alice looked imploringly towards Miss Waters, but dared not object. Her eyes filled with tears, and she burst into a fit of crying which it was difficult to check.

"Don't cry, my dear," said Miss Waters; "here, take a little cracker and a drink of this nice tea. I wish Bridget would hurry with that beef-tea she was told to make two hours ago."

"I saw her come in while Doctor Blossom was speaking," said Mrs. Marvel, going over to a table. "Here it is," taking up a bowl of beef-tea upon which a great deal of fat was swimming.

"She can't take that," said Miss Waters; "it would make her sick."

"Miss Waters," said Mrs. Marvel, "I forbid your putting ideas of discontent into the minds of the pupils. It was your sympathy that caused the outbreak just now, which must be at once stopped, or I must find means for correcting it. No more crying, Alice. You

shall have good care, but I don't allow *any crying at all.* Mind that now."

The little creature would gladly have stopped, but it was impossible. Debility from sickness, and the want of stimulus had completely overcome her, and she trembled as if in an ague.

Mrs. Marvel left the room, and Miss Waters took Alice in her arms, and soothed her troubled little soul by telling her that she would spend all her leisure time in the little bed-room with her, and that she would soon be well, and then what fine times she would have again; how the little girls would often go in to see her while she was sick, and bring her flowers, and little presents, and that Mary Staunton should sleep with her, and would give up all her lessons to stay day and night with her.

Alice shuddered and hid her face in Miss Waters' neck.

"Are you cold, my dear, this warm summer day? Look up; don't be babyish; what is the matter?"

Alice made no reply, but held her arms closely around Miss Waters, as if afraid of being dragged away by an invisible monster.

You may ask, good reader, why did she not tell her fears, and her abhorrence of Mary Staunton.

Have you never known the fact from experience, that little children seldom tell their troubles to any one? Look back upon your own childhood, and see if there were not times when you concealed even from your fond mother fears that your young imagination made terrific? See if there were not many wrongs and real sorrows of your young heart of which you never spoke. Children require to be tenderly watched, and their confidences gained by the most affectionate and loving sympathy extended to them in all their little griefs.

CHAPTER III.

Mrs. Marvel entered the large school-room after Dr. Blossom left the Hall, where nearly two hundred scholars were engaged in recitations. Her presence was always a signal for silence. Every eye was directed towards her, not a few of which were red, and swollen from the trials inevitable to those who tread the rugged road to learning. Mrs. Marvel remained a moment without speaking, and then said:

"I have a new study to propose to you, young ladies of the first class; I hope you will enter upon it with a zeal worthy of this establishment, and which will result in advantages that may benefit your *children's children.*"

The thought of their children's children caused a suppressed titter that ran through the first class; and a smile forced itself even upon the usually unmoved features of the monitress, Miss Knight, who was at her post. A look of discontent, however, was soon visible upon the features of the first class, which showed that the proposal of a new study was not very agreeable.

Mrs. Marvel paused, and then continued: "The science of Physiology is the one I wish to introduce into my establishment. It will be taught by Dr. Blossom, who will give you lectures upon the subject three times a week."

"I'll learn!"—"I'll join!"—"I'll take lessons!"—

"So will I!"—was called out from every side of the room, and Mrs. Marvel had the satisfaction of seeing that her pupils were with her in the new undertaking.

"I will allow you to write to your parents, young ladies, to-day; and in a week I will decide by the answers you receive whether the number of pupils will compensate Doctor Blossom for the valuable time he must spend with you. Say to your parents that the terms are $10 a quarter, *with the privilege of an anatomical chart at the close of the course.*"

Mrs. Marvel left the school-room, and went to give orders to have the little green room prepared for Alice Stanley; and directed that she should be removed at once. Then calling Mary Staunton she told her, in a severe tone, "to lay aside her books, and take care of Alice until she was sufficiently recovered to go to the school-room dormitory."

Mary muttered, "that she was no servant, and she did not see what right Mrs. Marvel had to make her work like one. Alice Stanley was no better than she was, and she wouldn't be her nurse." This was said in a low growling tone, but sufficiently audible to let Mrs. Marvel know, that Mary was refusing to obey her.

"Grumble, will you?" said Mrs. Marvel, striking her first on one side of her face, and then upon the other.

"Yes I will," screamed Mary, flying at Mrs. Marvel with the fury of a tigress. "I *will* grumble, and bite too; you have trampled upon me long enough. I hate you, and I hate everybody. I don't care what becomes of me."

"The wretch! The wretch!" shrieked Mrs. Marvel; "take her off! take her off! she will kill me!" Mary had attempted to hold Mrs. Marvel's hands from

striking her; but more than this she dared not venture upon, although her threats were loud and angry. The unfortunate girl expected to be locked up again, perhaps for a week, in the dark room; but like many others, Mrs. Marvel was very variable in her moods. The punishments and rewards dealt out by her were in proportion to the happy or unhappy state of her own mind at the time. Although alarmed by Mary's outburst of passion, she was by no means as angry as the offence might justify. The pleasant state of feeling produced by the prospect of a new item to be added to the list of "EXTRAS" for the study proposed by Doctor Blossom, rendered her far more forgiving that day than usual.

"Go to the dormitory, you bad girl!" said Mrs. Marvel, as soon as she could release herself from her grasp. "Go to the dormitory, and reflect upon your wicked, wayward, BAD disposition!"

Mary was surprised at the mild rebuke and light punishment, and hastened out of sight lest more severe ones should follow.

The green room was prepared. Miss Waters brought in Alice and laid her upon the bed. The little invalid covered her head with the clothes to shut out the sight of her dreaded companion, whom she expected every moment to take a place by her side. A gentle tap at the door was answered by Miss Waters, and Isabella entered.

"*I* have permission to stay with Alice a little while," said Isabella. "Miss Waters, Mrs. Marvel desires you to go to her room. The postman has come," she added in a sad tone, "and no letters for me."

"I thought Mary Staunton was to take my place," said Miss Waters.

"The poor unfortunate girl is again in punishment, and will not be out till nine o'clock to-night," replied Isabella.

Miss Waters gathered up her work and went to the bed to tell Alice that Isabella was there. They had spoken in a whisper, and the child had not heard her enter the room.

"Good-bye, my dear," said Miss Waters, "I must go now; your friend has come to stay with you, and you will be very happy."

"Oh dear! oh dear! I'll die, I'll die!" said Alice, shuddering with fear. "Don't leave me with her, dear Miss Waters."

"Not with Bella, Alice?" inquired Isabella.

"Can you speak to me now?" asked Alice, scarcely able to realize that Isabella was with her. "Do *you* think that I am good enough? Am I not very disagreeable? But dear mamma never called me so. Dear mamma was so sick, too, but she used to kiss me and speak so kindly to me, Bella. Don't you think she loved me?" Isabella sat down by the bedside, and told Alice how much she loved her, and how much her mother loved her, and how much her mother wished to see her.

"Mrs. Marvel said that mamma would die. *You* do not think she will die, do you? Tell me, dear Bella. *You* say she will not, and I'll believe you. You always tell the truth. Do speak, dear, dear Bella! Won't they take me home? won't they let me see my dear mother if she is going to die? Don't you think Mrs. Marvel will let me go if I am *very, very* good, Bella?"

"Perhaps she will," replied Isabella, affected by the child's appeal to her, for she knew that a letter had come that morning from Mr. Stanley asking Mrs. Mar-

vel's advice as to the propriety or expediency of taking Alice home awhile. This Isabella heard accidentally, and therefore could not allude to it until Mrs. Marvel spoke of it to Alice. "You must be a good little girl, Ally," she said, taking Alice on her lap, "and do every thing to get well again; for if your papa should send for you, you could not go if you were sick, you know."

Young as Alice was she saw the importance of exertion, and resolved to do her part.

"How do people die?" asked Alice in almost a whisper. Isabella found it difficult to reply to the question, and at the same time avoid giving a shock to her sensitive nature; but she spoke of the joys of heaven, and the goodness of God in taking us from this world, to give us a better home, where we would always be happy; that the soul had to leave the body to go to Heaven and be with God, and that this separation was called death.

"Did Mrs. Marvel mean that dear mamma was going to heaven?" asked Alice, looking earnestly in Isabella's face.

"Yes, dear," replied Isabella. "But perhaps our Lord will not take your dear mother until she is very old. Mrs. Marvel may be mistaken."

"I'd like to go home," said Alice, "and if mamma should die I'd like to go with her."

The conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Mary Staunton, who came in sulkily, and sat down on a chair near Isabella. Mary had heard the last question asked by Alice, and Isabella's reply, and she gazed vacantly at one and the other.

"What do you know about dying?" asked Mary, giving Alice a punch in her side.

Alice looked terrified, and made no reply, but asked to be laid upon the bed.

"I am sure Alice will sleep very quietly in this little room so far away from the noise of the dormitory; and you will be very kind to her, Mary, I hope," said Isabella.

Alice closed her eyes, not to sleep, but to keep back the tears which she wished to conceal from Isabella.

"Is it not earlier than you expected to come to take care of Alice, Mary?" said Isabella.

"Yes," replied Mary. "Mrs. Marvel sent me word to leave the dormitory and try to do better."

"You blamed me the other day, Mary," said Isabella, "for telling Mrs. Marvel that you pained and offended Ellen Maylor in the attic. I could not avoid it without telling a lie."

"And why couldn't you tell one?" asked Mary.

"Because I never told a lie!" replied Isabella.

"*Never* told a lie," repeated Mary. "How could you help it? Why, I've told bushels, heaps of lies. I thought every bodytold lies. Who but you in this house does not? Mrs. Marvel tells lies. I've heard her a hundred times. The servants, the teachers, the girls tell lies, and *you* never told a lie? *Never told a lie?* I wish I had never told a lie."

"You know, Mary, that it is very wrong, and why do so?"

"I know it. I remember when I first came here I used to get red in the face when I told a lie. But now I can tell one with as innocent a look as I can tell the truth. Who cares for me? Who cares whether I am good or bad? Not one of the girls will walk with me, or sit with me. If I come near them, they look at one another and stop talking till I am gone. Don't you

suppose I know what they mean? Even that child," pointing to Alice, "dislikes me and is afraid of me. What am I? What do I look like? Why am I shunned? Would you be good if you were treated in this manner? Would you not like revenge? Would you not tease them, frighten them, strike them, make faces at them, hate them as I do, if you thought you were despised?" Mary burst into an uncontrollable fit of crying, and rubbed her eyes with her soiled apron until they were quite inflamed.

"Mary," said Isabella, "the girls would treat you kindly and like to have you with them, but you are too rough and ill-natured, and then you are so jealous. Now begin to-morrow and see how gentle you can become. If you will do so, I will be the first to notice you and love you."

Mary looked up; a smile struggled to make its way to her sullen brow, which had become habitually downcast. But a moment more the little light had gone, leaving the countenance of the unfortunate girl dark, bitter, and revengeful as before.

"If I should try to be good they would all laugh at me," said Mary, "and *you* would love me because you promised to do so."

Mrs. Marvel's step was heard coming from her room. Mary sprang from the floor where she had thrown herself while crying, and stood in sullen silence in the middle of the room when Mrs. Marvel entered.

Mrs. Marvel looked at Alice, told her it was time to go to sleep, ordered Mary, in a dictatorial tone, to be very wakeful, if Alice desired any thing in the night, and then spoke to Isabella for several minutes. Isabella kissed Alice "good night," and went to the first class dormitory.

After giving some further instructions, respecting orders left by the doctor, Mrs. Marvel left Alice and her dreaded companion together for the night.

The following morning she was much worse, and Doctor Blossom hinted to Mrs. Marvel, that the best nursing would be required, together with his attendance, to prevent a brain fever. It was a singular case, he said. Strong nervous excitement, without any apparent cause. Indeed, it was quite inexplicable; her case was a puzzling one. There had been instances, he said, where the heart was found affected, in cases marked by symptoms such as her disease manifested, and yet it could not be so here, it was evident. He would like to consult, he said, with Dr. Root, if agreeable to "Madam." She consented; and that afternoon Dr. Root was called in, and offered to remove the child to his own house and attend her with care. Her father and he were much attached friends, and he was sure, he said, that Mr. Stanley would desire it, if he knew the circumstances. Mrs. Marvel was pleased with the arrangement, and wrote that afternoon to Mr. Stanley, that Dr. Root would remove "the darling child" to his house, which she had no doubt would in a few days restore her to health, as she had only a little nervous attack, caused by an alarm of fire in the house, which, she was happy to say, proved to be a false one.

CHAPTER IV.

"My dear," said Dr. Root to his wife, after his return from Marvel Hall, on the day of the consultation, "little Alice is very sick, and I have obtained the permission of Mrs. Marvel to remove her to our house; you know, Bessy, she cannot have the necessary quiet in that feminine Babel. You are a good nurse, and I know it will be your delight to do your part towards restoring that delicate little creature to health. I fear Mrs. Stanley will not live long, and poor Stanley's heart could not bear the loss of both mother and child. God grant that one at least may be spared to him."

Mrs. Root replied to the request by one of her sweetest smiles of assent, which the doctor always understood. She spoke but little, and her countenance had become to him such an index of her mind, that he seldom waited for words, in reply to his proposals. His own manner and conversation were so hurried, that he gave her but little opportunity for speaking, and, consequently, the habit of listening had added to her naturally taciturn disposition.

Mrs. Root was an attentive and agreeable listener, and always interested those in her company. Some persons considered her extremely fascinating. While the doctor was speaking to her about bringing Alice from

the Hall, he was writing a memorandum, giving orders to Jerry to prepare the close carriage, and was putting up some small powders for a poor woman who stood in the hall, with an infant in her arms so pale and emaciated that it seemed hopeless to suppose that life could long remain in so frail a tenement.

When Dr. Root returned to Marvel Hall for Alice, the establishment was in a state of commotion delightful to the girls. A concert and soirée were to be given that evening, which it was hoped would gratify the fond parents, and afford recreation to the pupils. The confused sounds that came from the "practising of parts," the tuning of pianos, hammering of the carpenters, who were preparing a temporary stage for the performers, and the loud talking and laughing of more than a hundred girls, let out from classes, were not calculated to improve the nervous debility of the little patient.

"It is unavoidable," said Mrs. Marvel, "and this reconciles me to parting with the child. You are very kind to take her home with you, Doctor; I have written to Mr. Stanley that you would do so."

The doctor had no confidence in Mrs. Marvel's judgment as to the cause of Alice's illness, and therefore asked no questions. According to custom when they met, he and Dr. Blossom stepped aside to consult again respecting the mode of treatment to be pursued; but they spoke but little on the subject, because Dr. Root had no respect for Dr. Blossom's opinion; and of this Dr. Blossom was fully aware, having on former occasions received some heavy broadsides from Dr. Root for malpractice. They spoke on various subjects until a sufficient time had elapsed for a decent consultation, and then advanced towards Mrs. Marvel with grave and wise expressions of countenance.

"A little time at my house," said Dr. Root, "with good nursing, I trust, will restore her. It is all that is requisite. Is she prepared to go home with me, Mrs. Marvel?"

Mrs. Marvel nodded a reply, and led the way to the little room at the end of the hall. Alice was on Isabella's lap, looking languid, but cheerful, and was watching Mary Staunton, who was putting her clothes in a trunk; and cautioned Mary not to forget her mother's miniature, and the little doll Isabella had given her.

Mary turned around when the door opened, and seeing Dr. Root and Dr. Blossom, held down her head with shame and embarrassment. Having naturally a great deal of pride, she felt painfully the position in which she was placed. Not knowing but she might be under obligations to Mrs. Marvel for all she received, she submitted, though with an ill grace, to the nondescript place she occupied in the school; although there was at times something in Mrs. Marvel's manner that led her to suspect that she had a right to a higher position. Her courage had never risen sufficiently to enable her to do more than obstinately rebel against severity. Dr. Blossom made a passing remark upon the kindness of the young ladies to the little girl, and Dr. Root extended his hand to Mary, inquiring if she had suffered much since he gave her the prescription for her eyes. She rose from the floor, where she had been seated before the trunk, and replied in a low voice, that she had not. Raising her eyes, she met the steady gaze of Dr. Blossom, who had often remarked her singularly rude manner and wild appearance, and had been puzzled to define her exact place among the pupils. There was an occasional gleam of brightness in

her face, that indicated talent and depth of feeling, but the usual expression was sullen and stolid; and it was evident that the better feelings and dispositions of her nature had become almost paralyzed.

"Is this young lady a pupil of the first class?" asked Dr. Blossom, still looking towards Mary. Mary laughed, and hid her face in her hand, and going to the window turned her back upon the doctor.

Mrs. Marvel elevated her eyebrows, shook her head, and raised her hands, saying in a despairing tone:

"She ought to be; her age entitles her to the place; but," she added in a whisper, "it is impossible for me to make ladies of *all* the children who are sent here; you know, Doctor, I will do all in my power; more could not be expected. I have received a letter to-day from her father. He has been many years absent. After he confided her to my care, I heard nothing from him for many months. It was supposed he was lost. But I kept his child. I often thought it my duty to myself to bind her out, when I heard from him so seldom; but I am glad now I did not, for I find that she will be an heiress. You see what she is! Her father may soon return, no doubt expecting to find her advanced and accomplished. What can I do?"

The doctor shook his head, and walked to the window to speak to Mary. She turned suddenly round, and, without an apology, left the room in a shuffling gait, which she had acquired from attempting to keep slipshod shoes upon her feet.

Dr. Root had been talking to Isabella. Her ladylike and engaging manner formed a strong contrast to that of the rude, slovenly, untaught, ill-natured girl, who had just left them. And who should be blamed for the difference? Nature?—We leave it to the reader

to answer. Isabella was the beloved child of kind parents, whose affection had brought out and nourished every good quality of her heart. She had been born in the lap of luxury, but had been taught not to abuse its gifts. Every one loved her; every one smiled upon her; every one praised her. Where were poor Mary's years of childhood passed? those years when the heart is susceptible to good or evil; when the affections cling to whatever is nearest; and if torn from the support they require, wither and die. Who had smiled at her approach? Who had ever praised her? Who can blame her then, if she had become the wicked, wayward, envious, and revengeful girl she seemed to all who knew her?

It had been decided that Isabella should accompany the doctor and Alice; and she had put on her bonnet, and was seated in the carriage, ready to receive the little pet, whom Dr. Root carried in his arms, and placed on Isabella's lap. He bowed to Mrs. Marvel, and to Dr. Blossom, who stood at the door, and then took his seat by Isabella's side. Before they had reached Dr. Root's door, Alice's countenance brightened. When they stopped before the hospitable mansion, they saw Mrs. Root and Annie at the window, watching for their arrival. Both went to the door to welcome the little girl, and were delighted to see Isabella, who, they insisted, should come in and remain a little time; "long enough to take some ripe fruit and cream," Mrs. Root said, who remembered how gratefully such invitations were received by her when at school. Alice was laid upon a bed in the room which had been prepared for her, and partook of some orange jelly, while Annie sat down by her side and tried to amuse her with stories.

Alice told Annie how happy she felt, and how beautiful her room looked to her. "That long dormitory at the Hall is very lonesome," said Alice; "you would not like it, would you, Annie?"

"I do not know," replied Annie; "I think I would like boarding-school very much."

Isabella kissed Alice and Annie good-bye, and thanked Mrs. Root for the basket of ripe fruit she was taking to school with her, and promised to get leave to accept Mrs. Root's invitation to pass the vacation with her.

"It will soon come," said Isabella. "Only one month more, and good-bye to books and school for a time. I am sure Mrs. Marvel will allow me to come. She likes to have as few girls in vacation to take care of as possible; but I must go; I have my music to practise for the soirée. Mr. Devini will be at the school at three. We have a rehearsal."

Alice's little heart swelled with regret at parting with Isabella, but she quickly forgot this little trouble, so happy was she made by her kind friends. The little bed upon which she lay was hung in white dimity curtains, and the tassel fringe upon them which moved when any one came near the bed, reminded her of merry little bells. Upon the window shades were painted gardens, fountains, beautiful ladies holding parasols over their heads, and handsome gentlemen with eye-glasses bowing to them, little children catching butterflies and gathering flowers. These afforded Alice as much pleasure as if they were real personages; what particularly attracted her in the picture was a carriage drawn by spirited horses. It was so like the one Cinderella rode in to the ball. Annie's toys, baby-house, and dolls were neatly arranged opposite the bed, and

on the other side of the room, was a small book-shelf, which was suspended against the wall, upon which her books were laid, with neatness and regularity. A half dressed doll and a basket of colored silks, and scraps of various kinds on a little table, made Alice long to get well, to help Annie to sew; "but then I will have to go back to school," thought Alice, and she drew a heavy sigh. While Alice had been examining the room, Annie was standing upon a chair before her book-shelf, and was endeavoring to find an entertaining one to read to her.

"Oh! here is a beautiful story, a fairy tale, Alice," said Annie, jumping from the chair with the book in her hand.

"Mrs. Marvel does not allow us to read fairy tales," said Alice. "She punished me one day for reading one which Ida Brown lent me; and I am afraid she would not like it, if I listened to one now." Annie turned away from the bedside, disappointed, and put the "Fairies' Reward" upon the shelf again. The nurse reminded the little girl that Mrs. Root had recommended sleep to the sick one. Annie kissed her little friend, left the room, and softly closed the door.

That morning, Mrs. Root had received letters from her absent sons, who were at college in England; they wrote that they would return home in a few weeks. Superintending the removal of some unnecessary articles in their rooms, and putting others in their places, that would add to the comfort of the young collegians, had kept Mrs. Root longer from her little charge than she had intended, after Isabella left. She opened the door gently, and was glad to find the little patient in a quiet slumber.

"She has taken the jelly, marm," said Nora, "and

fell asleep soon after Miss Annie left her. But don't you think the color is too deep on that right cheek, and the other is white as the wall, marm."

"The little creature has been sick some time," rereplied Mrs. Root. "The doctor tells me, since she came to the school, she has had frequent attacks of debility and loss of appetite, but these were considered by Mrs. Marvel of too little consequence to notice, so long as she was able to keep up. No doubt, the frequent fits of crying, of which Mrs. Marvel complained to me, were caused by this nervous weakness. This last sudden attack of spasms was produced by a fright. An alarm of fire was given by one of the girls, and she was forgotten in the dormitory, at the time, until the scene was over. She was found in a fit. When she awakes, call me, and give her a little beef-tea and toast, Nora."

CHAPTER V.

THAT night at Marvel Hall was one of excitement to the young ladies. The confusion in the first class dormitory, while the girls were dressing, can only be understood by one who has witnessed a similar scene.

The day being a holiday, silence was not imposed upon them, and the privilege was appreciated.

"Can you lend me a pair of gloves? I can't find a pair high or low," said Emily Inglis, turning her clothes in her trunk upside down and down side up.

This request was not made to any one in particular of the dozen girls near her.

"There's a pair, if you can get them on," replied Ellen Maylor, tossing her own to Emily, over the head of Ada Anderson, who sat upon the floor, trying to squeeze her foot into a satin slipper a size too small.

"Pea green gloves," said Emily, laughing heartily; "I'd look smart in them, wouldn't I? gay, but not gaudy, I suppose. Have you no others? No? These won't answer. What *will* I do?"

"Do without them," screamed a large, fat girl from the other end of the dormitory. "*I'd* go without, before *I'd* borrow."

"Would you though?" replied Emily. "It isn't because you're too big to wear anybody's clothes, that you don't borrow, I suppose."

"Got any hair pins?"—"Lend us some pomatum?"—"Oh, let *me* wear that scarf if *you* don't want it"—"What a color you've got?"—"I wish I were as pale as you"—"Drink as much vinegar as I do, and you can be"—"I wonder what Mr. Devini will say when he finds *I'm* as hoarse as a frog"—"What a horrid screech Ella has"—"Don't tread upon my dress"—"There! you horrid creature, you have broken the lacing, and I could not get another now for love or money"—were parts of sentences which rose above the general din, and might have been heard here and there, but it was impossible to understand any conversation without great exertion to listen. Then the confusion of things of every description upon the chairs, tables, and floor, and the jostling, running, and pushing, kept up throughout the process of dressing, made it a mystery to understand how any thing orderly could come from so much disorder. But it came at last; and the girls stood two by two in a long procession, reaching from the dormitory door to the lower hall. "There's Mr. Devini!" said one—"There's my favorite, Dr. Blossom!" said another—"I wonder who has come?" asked a third—"Can't you keep quiet, Mary Staunton?" said Miss Knight—"Keep off from my dress!" said Mary, to a large girl behind her—"No wonder you are careful of it," replied the offender, "it is the first nice dress you ever wore. I wonder at Mrs. Marvel's taste putting *you* in sky blue tarlton." Mary scowled, but made no reply.

"Don't mind her, Mary," said Isabella, who was near her. "I never saw you look half so well; that wreath of white roses on your head is very becoming."

Mary felt better satisfied with her appearance than she had ever done before. Indeed, she could not under-

stand what had opened Mrs. Marvel's heart enough to dress her so well on this occasion. "It must be for her own credit's sake," thought Mary. The parlor doors were thrown open, and at the sound of a little bell, the procession moved on slowly, each one of the young ladies bowing and curtseying to Mrs. Marvel, as they passed her, and taking their seats around a platform which had been placed in the centre of the room, and upon which were two grand pianos, a harp, and two or three guitars.

"I admire the order and regularity of this establishment," said one of the visitors. "*What style* madame teaches her pupils," whispered Dr. Blossom. "In what do you notice it?" asked a lady who sat near him, anxious for information, not professing to know much about the subject. "Well, well," replied the doctor, "in the *tout ensemble*." What the *tout ensemble* was, the good woman could not conjecture; she nodded assent, and during the rest of the evening, was watching eagerly for something that would look like a "*tout ensemble*." It was to be something stylish, that was clear.

"Who is that man beating the air with a stick?" asked a deaf old lady, who held an ear trumpet in her hand.

"Mr. Devini," was the reply.

"What ails him?" inquired the old lady, earnestly.

"Nothing!" screamed her neighbor. "He is beating time for the young ladies."

"Beating what?"

"Time! Ma'am."

"Oh!"

Several duets, solos, and quartettes were played and sung; and the parents left the concert fully satis-

fied that Mrs. Marvel's *admirable establishment* could not be equalled. The "*tout ensemble*," however, if fully revealed, might have astonished more than the simple Mrs. Goodwin.

"Allow me," said Doctor Blossom, on the following morning, "to congratulate you, Madame Marvel, upon the satisfaction that your pupils gave last evening. It is to women such as you, Madame, that we will owe the prosperity of our Great Republic. Are you not the guardian of those who are to form the characters and dispositions of the rulers of our nation? the supporters of the stripes and stars! What pride must fill your generous heart, when you behold the happy results of your excellent training."

Mrs. Marvel was preparing to be overcome by this eulogy; but the overflowing of her heart was checked by the entrance of Mary Staunton, who came with a message from Miss Knight from the first class. Mary withdrew suddenly when she saw Dr. Blossom. In doing so, she caught her foot in a rent in her dress, and fell upon the floor. The doctor sprang forward to assist her. "He feared," he said at first, "that her ankle was sprained," but an examination of it proved it to be only a little injured.

"I am glad it is nothing serious, Miss Staunton," said the doctor, wiping his moustache, and preparing to leave. Mary blushed, held down her head, made no reply, but remained silently seated on a low ottoman upon which the doctor had placed her.

"What age is this young lady?" asked the doctor. "If she can spare the time it would be well to allow her a few weeks at a mineral spring for that weakness of her eyelids."

"She is fifteen," replied Mrs. Marvel, not remarking

that the question was an unnecessary one. "I do not know how she can go to a mineral spring, unless means to do so come from her father."

"When do you expect to hear again," asked the doctor, in a careless tone, while he was pulling a rose-bud from a bouquet of flowers which ornamented the centre table.

"It may be in a day, and it may be in a year," replied Mrs. Marvel.

The doctor spoke of other things for a few moments, and bade good-morning, after paying the most fulsome compliments to Mrs. Marvel upon her interesting appearance.

CHAPTER VI.

A FEW weeks made a great change in the little patient at Doctor Root's house. She was permitted to join the family circle in the parlor on the evening of the expected arrival of the young collegians. The doctor and Mrs Root, Annie and Alice, were listening in silence to every sound, but were again and again disappointed. "Here they are at last," said the servant, who was waiting in the hall. "Here are Master Harry and Master Everett." The door opened and they were welcomed by loving hearts. Little Annie ran from one to the other, asking many questions, while the doctor shook their hands heartily, slapped their shoulders, and amused himself at their expense, commenting upon the changed appearance which two years had produced upon the students. Mrs. Root said but little, but there was a loving gentleness in her manner, and an earnest gaze upon her sons, which spoke of deeper love than could be expressed by words.

"Who is this, Annie?" said Everett, the younger of the brothers, advancing towards Alice, who had modestly crept into a large Turkish chair in one corner of the room. She rested her elbow upon the arm of the chair, and her little head upon her hand. Her light ringlets fell in profusion around her shoulders, and

partly concealed her face. Everett took her hand and stooped to kiss her. "Oh! brother," said Annie, "this is Alice Stanley, my little sister. We have agreed to call one another sister. *She* is glad to see you, too, and has waited until she is very, very tired. Poor little Ally," added Annie, putting her arms around Alice with affectionate tenderness. Everett stood a moment before the little stranger, and then took her in his arms and held her up near the gas-light. "She is a little fairy, I believe, Annie," said Everett. "Where did you find her?" Alice, mortified atbeing treated so much like a baby, turned her soft deep blue eyes from his gaze, and seemed confused and troubled by the strange introduction to "brother Everett," of whom she had heard so much.

"Don't mind him, Ally," said Annie, "he knows you are not a fairy; he is only in play." Everett laughed heartily, and placed her again in the large arm-chair into which she sank languidly. While Harry was talking with his mother, Annie pulled his coat, saying: "Come, brother Harry, see Ally, you must see Ally. Alice has not seen you. Come," said Annie, impatiently. Harry turned around, looked at her vacantly, and continued his conversation, in which he appeared very much engrossed.

"I met him in London," said Harry; "he is an intelligent, agreeable man; dignified and affable in his address; his whole heart seems bound up in this child. He told me that he has been made very unhappy at times from hearing no news of her, that he has written whenever an opportunity offered, and has sent sufficient money to secure to her every advantage. It is his intention to take her with him to Europe, and perhaps to India."

"*Do* speak to Ally, brother Harry," said Annie, still pulling his coat. "Never mind, Harry," said Everett, who had seated himself in front of Alice, and was tossing small candies into her lap, which he had taken from a fancy box he drew from his pocket. "Never mind him. He has lost his heart to a young lady whom he has never seen, and has already laid his plans for their future happiness. Come, Harry, own it and you'll be excused. What is her name, Hal? Mary? May? Mary Staunton? that is it," said Everett, rubbing and clapping his hands, and laughing immoderately. Harry came over to Alice and mechanically bowed before her, as if she were a young lady of sixteen. Doctor and Mrs. Root were greatly amused, and even Annie joined in the laugh against him, but Alice hid her face, not quite understanding whether the laugh was directed against her or Harry.

"The fellow has not taken off his travelling coat yet," said Everett. "If I had not been with him, I verily believe he would not have reached you in safety, mother. His head has been turned ever since Mr. Staunton told him the history of his life, which history I must confess threw a halo of glory around his young daughter, whom he has come to visit after years of absence and marvellous adventures; and Hal's youthful fancy has pictured a being not of earthly mould. Now, for aught he knows, she is very far from being an angel."

Dr. Root, with unusual gravity, said, "that poor Mary would sadly disappoint the fond father's expectations." Hal denied the truth of Everett's charges against him, but acknowledged he had a curiosity to see the daughter of one in whom he had been so much interested.

"Mary Staunton," said Annie, "is a cruel, frightful girl. Alice don't like her, nor do I; she is dreadful."

Alice turned pale at the mere mention of her name.

"My dear," said Mrs. Root, "you do very wrong to speak so uncharitably of Mary. Remember, my dear, she has never had a mother's care. You should not speak of her faults, but be grateful for the instruction you have received."

Hal and Everett went to their rooms, where their trunks had been taken, and Patty laid out a nice supper while the gentlemen were attending to their toilet. Dr. Root went to the office to dismiss "a sore eye," and a woman with a "disthressed heart," and found half a dozen other patients who had been nodding in their chairs while waiting to see him. One wanted a "dozing" and another a "settling powder." They were dismissed as soon as possible, and again the family circle were seated around a table in the dining-room, indulging in the liveliest conversation; the young gentlemen relating the marvels of college life, and discussing the profundity of this or that new theory; or descanting upon the wonderful developments of science during the century in which they were born; leaving it a matter of doubt to the listeners whether the world owed the debt of gratitude to the great Supreme Being for their birth, or whether they owed it, for having lived in such times as the present. Doctor and Mrs. Root were greatly amused with their sallies of wit; and parental pride threw a mantle of charity over a multitude of delicate weaknesses, which were displayed in egotistical assertions and asseverations, unavoidable, one might judge, from their universality among collegians. Hal and Everett were unlike in feature and disposition. Hal was pale and fair-haired, and, like his

mother, reserved. He had a manly, intellectual beauty, and a disposition that inspires more esteem and admiration than love. He seldom made friends of new acquaintances; but as seldom lost them when once gained. It was not so with Everett. He was impulsive and ardent, and took the hearts of his friends by storm. He was as fond of gayety and all that is social in life as Hal was of retirement and study. The fond parents were proud of both, and saw in each qualities to love and cherish; and the sons were affectionate and respectful, and appreciated the inestimable blessings which their home afforded. The night was fast passing so pleasantly away that not till a late hour was the little family dispersed, and each one lost in sleep.

A different scene was passing at Marvel Hall that evening.

Mr. Staunton, who had arrived that afternoon, had stopped at one of the principal hotels in the city until he could ascertain where Mrs. Marvel lived.

"My dear sir," said he to a friend who had accompanied him in his travels during the last few weeks, and who was dining with him, "I cannot express my feelings on finding myself again in this land after so many perils. If you were a parent you could understand my heart. I almost fear to breathe, lest even at the last moment, something will snatch from my grasp this long anticipated happiness of meeting my darling child. I almost fear to inquire for my dear Mary, lest they will tell me she is not living. It is several years since I have heard from the lady to whom I intrusted her. But wandering as I have done (unavoidably) it could not be expected that I should receive tidings very often from home. My communications must have reached her, however. I have sent letters and money very

frequently. I ascertained a few moments since that Mrs. Marvel's school, where I placed Mary, is now in —— street, and I intend going directly after dinner to her house."

"What a meeting!" said his friend. "It is worth the years of toil and anxiety you have endured, to enjoy the happiness of such a moment."

"Pardon me," said Mr. Staunton, "if I appear childish. These are tears of a heart overflowing with gratitude. You can't understand them, sir. You are not a father. You have not lived to lose all you have loved save this one idolized child of your heart. You have not learned how the love of a daughter supports, sustains, and often, next to the love of God, has saved poor weak man from sin and despair. There have been moments when I could not believe I would ever reach her, so many times have I been thwarted in my efforts. But it was not the will of God till now; and I trust we shall never be separated again."

The friend replied that he sympathized with him, and could understand his happiness. He hoped that he would allow him to become acquainted with his daughter, in whom he already felt a strong interest. The fond father assured him of the pleasure it would afford him to introduce him. He intended to take a private parlor for his daughter at the hotel, and allow her to spend a month with him before leaving for Europe.

At eight o'clock that evening Mrs. Marvel was seated in her private parlor, in which nothing was wanting for the comfort of the occupant; at least so thought the girls, when they were favored by an occasional glance through the half-opened door. Mr. Marvel—(we beg pardon for not having introduced him before. We did not, for the very simple reason that, as

Mrs. Marvel asserted, he was of little consequence, and was only known as the husband of Mrs. Marvel.) Mr. Marvel was reading one of the latest novels, and at the same time sipping a glass of punch which stood on the table near him. The bell rang. The maid announced, by putting her head in the door while she remained outside, that "a gentleman had gone into the parlor, and had inquired for Mrs. Marvel and Miss Staunton."

Mrs. Marvel looked at Mr. Marvel. He raised his eyes a moment from his book, and gave an inquiring glance, which Mrs. Marvel understood to mean, "Do you wish me to go?" "No! No!" she replied, "what good would you do? It may be her father." "Whose father?" inquired innocent Mr. Marvel, who sometimes asked what his wife thought very silly questions. "Whose father?" repeated the lady; "why Mary Staunton's father. I'm sure I never expected to see *him* again." Mrs. Marvel looked in the mirror, arranged her dress, and went to the reception parlor. She entered the room in her usual manner with the air of a person of vulgar pretension. Mr. Staunton, who was wholly absorbed with the thought of meeting his child, found it difficult to wait for even the ordinary courtesies of salutation, before asking if his daughter was well. "He hoped," he said, "that his long absence had not made him less dear to his darling Mary." Mrs. Marvel was greatly confused, and apologized for her manner, by assuring Mr. Staunton, whose card she held in her hand, that this unexpected return had quite overcome her. His presence brought back to her mind, vividly, the day when he left his child at Marvel Hall, a sweet, interesting-looking, little girl, dressed in deep mourning, with bright black eyes, and raven curls; who clung to her father and refused to leave him, when

Mrs. Marvel approached her and asked her to go with her to the school-room where the little girls were at play. In the twinkling of an eye the omissions of years since then arose before her; and their consequences filled her with dismay. It was too late now, she thought, to remedy the evil, and she must only make the best of it. "Pray be seated, sir. I will send for Mary to come to the parlor. It will be well to prepare her a little for your arrival before she sees you. Too great a surprise might injure the child." Mrs. Marvel walked slowly to the other side of the room after this speech, and rang a bell; a servant appeared, and the message was given to "tell *Miss Staunton* to come to the parlor where her father was waiting to see her."

"Mrs. Marvel," said Mr. Staunton, "I cannot express my gratitude to you. There are occasions when the feelings cannot be understood in words, and when to express them would seem to lessen their intensity. You have been the guardian of my child during that period of life when she needed almost an angel's care, and wings to shelter her and guide her steps; and may God bless you for it. There is no throne on earth that could add to the glory of your position. You are intrusted with pure young hearts. You prepare them to do well their part here, and that will secure to them a happy eternity."

Every word Mr. Staunton uttered, burned deeply into the conscience of the worldly-minded woman, who was not wholly lost to a sense of the duty she owed to the children under her charge, though long had she been sadly, wickedly, neglecting it.

Before Mr. Staunton had come to the house that evening the study bell had rung, and had called together the girls in the large school-room, where they were

expected to devote one hour to the lessons given them for the following day. With the exception of a few lawless pupils, both teachers and scholars were observing the silence imposed upon them during that hour. Among these few was, as may be expected, the ever-offending Mary, to whom insubordination had become second nature.

The servant entered and said, in a loud tone: "Miss Mary Staunton's father is in the parlor and Mrs. Marvel desires her to go to see him." Mary sprang from the "idlers seat," upon which she had been ordered to sit alone, and for an instant stood motionless with her mouth open, and her large eyes staring in confused wonder at the sudden news. Then clapping her hands she jumped up and down like a maniac, crying: "Good, good, good!" Every eye was turned towards her; some laughed, some cried because *their* father had not come; and the teachers looked at one another puzzled what to do. An instant more and Mary started for the parlor, leaping over benches, and little children, and pushing aside the larger girls who impeded her way; dropping first one slipper and then the other before she had reached the door, where she was brought to a stand still; for the state of her feet without them surprised all but herself! Miss Knight placed herself against the door and caught hold of her. "*Mary Staunton*, are you crazy?" said the monitress, in a cold, gruff voice. "What do *you* look like to go to the parlor?"

"Here," said Isabella, taking off a fine French worked collar, and putting it on Mary.

"That won't do," said Miss Waters, "with her soiled stuff dress. Here is my linen one; there, that looks better—wait a minute, put on my silk apron."

Another girl smoothed her hair, which was so seldom thoroughly dressed it obstinately refused to lie very smooth now, while a fourth drew from her pocket a cambric handkerchief and gave it to her. A little girl at the end of the room tossed her old slippers to her over the heads of the first class, landing one of them in the lap of the most fastidious! It was new to Mary to be the object of thought, and she stood passively permitting them to do with her as they pleased. After the first wild outburst of feeling had passed, she seemed like one half stupefied by the sudden happiness.

"There, now, go," said Miss Knight, standing back from the door and pushing her out. "Every one to your places, girls; and not a word more," called out the monitress; and order was soon restored. Mary walked slowly through the hall, her thoughts coming with such rapidity and confusion to her mind, that she scarcely knew if she were waking or sleeping. Her face became unnaturally flushed, and added to the coarseness of her complexion, gave her but little the appearance of a lady. Her hard rough hands and soiled nails were covered by a pair of black mits which only made their deformities more apparent. Mary opened the door and entered the parlor timidly. She stood in the middle of the floor a moment unnoticed by Mr. Staunton, so sure was he that a servant had entered. "Mary," said Mrs. Marvel, "you do not know your father."

Mr. Staunton rose from his seat, advanced, drew back, advanced again.

"My child? My Mary?" he inquired, not able to conceal his disappointment and surprise. But in an instant he remembered that ne must not allow the child to witness any regret on his part. "My darling Mary,"

he said, clasping her in his arms, and weeping bitterly. "My darling Mary, my poor child," he continued, seating her by his side and gazing upon her intently.

Poor Mary felt embarrassed, and held down her head. She saw from her father's appearance her position, and had a bewildered sense of her own deficiencies.

The big tears dropt upon her lap; why, she scarcely knew. Was it the warm pressure of that father's hand which held hers in a fond clasp that called them forth? Had the tears come from deep recesses in her heart which had long been sealed?

Mrs. Marvel walked in an absent manner to the piano, and from the piano to the book-case; turned over and over a pile of *circulars* which lay upon the table; pulled out a flower from the vase and put it in again. Mr. Staunton drew from his breast a miniature which was suspended by a black ribbon round his neck, and looked at it, and then at Mary, to see if there remained one trace of the resemblance which he once thought so strong. A tear fell upon it, which Mary wiped off.

"Is that my mother?" said Mary. "I would like to see it."

Mr. Staunton handed it to her. "How very handsome she was! what soft black eyes! I suppose you expected to see me like her? Did you?"

"Call me father, Mary," said he, scarcely able to speak.

"I dared not ask Mrs. Marvel any thing about you, father, it is so long since I heard her speak of you. I was afraid she would tell me you were dead, and if *you* had died there would not have been one person on earth who loved me."

Mr. Staunton wished to say much, but found it impossible to speak. Mrs. Marvel's presence was oppressive to him. He felt the wound she had inflicted by the total neglect of his child, and feared the loss to her was irreparable.

Mrs. Marvel was conscious that her company was unnecessary; and in the blandest tone begged to be allowed to leave the father and child for a time.

The interview we will not intrude upon. The poor child was too ignorant to know the loss she had sustained. Time, under better treatment, will teach her that. But she felt that she was not what the daughter of Mr. Staunton should be.

At ten o'clock, Mary knocked at Mrs. Marvel's door. It was opened by Mrs. Marvel, who was in the midst of a disagreeable discussion with her husband, in which she made him understand it was of no consequence to the world whether he lived or died, eat, slept, or drank!

"Father wishes to speak to you," said Mary.

It was a new word to Mary, and already a faint ray of light beamed upon her countenance when she pronounced the sweet word "father." "Mrs. Marvel," said Mr. Staunton, when she entered the parlor, "I have been too much overcome this evening to allow me to enter into any explanation as to money matters with you, but I hope to-morrow to call and do so satisfactorily."

"My part is soon told, sir," replied Mrs. Marvel. "I kept your daughter for years, not hearing from you, or knowing whether I would see you again."

"Have you not received money from me?" he inquired coldly.

"Once or twice, only. Yes, once soon after you left."

"I sent you then £500. How much have you received since that time?"

"I could not tell without looking at my books. Not at all sufficient to repay me for the trouble I've had with, I am sorry to say, the stubborn temper of your child, I can assure you, sir."

Mr. Staunton was too polite to comment upon this last remark, but said with forced gentleness of tone and manner:

"Present your bill, madam, if you please; I am prepared to pay it. It is my wish that Mary should leave Marvel Hall; I shall sail for Europe soon; till then I wish her to remain with me at the hotel. Will you see, madam, that her wardrobe is made suitable? How soon will she be prepared to come?"

Mrs. Marvel smiled, and hoped very soon.

"It will be a new life for you, my dear," said Mrs. Marvel, patting Mary upon the shoulder. Mary jerked away from her, and muttered something indistinctly.

Mrs. Marvel shook her head, and nodded to Mr. Staunton, saying: "You see what the temper is!"

"I can only remember what it *was*, when I gave her to you, madam," he replied. "A more sweet, gentle, engaging child I never saw, nor of more refined mould. What is she now?" This last sentence was not heard by Mary; it was spoken in a low whisper, breathed in a sigh, and only intended for Mrs. Marvel's ear.

Mr. Staunton bade Mary good-night, and returned to the hotel with a sad and disappointed heart.

Mary, as soon as the hall door was closed, ran to the dormitory, where she found the girls asleep. In despite of all school rule, going from bed to bed, she awoke them, and told them in a tone of delight, before

unknown to her, of all she was going to do—what Mrs. Marvel said to her—how "the old thing" patted her on the shoulder—and how she jerked away—what fine dresses she would have—all the cakes and candies she would send them—what lots of money her father had—how fine he looked—and how fond he was of her. Miss Waters turned a deaf ear to the offence, but an open one to the recital, and then told Mary to go to bed.

CHAPTER VII.

The following morning Mrs. Marvel received a note from Mr. Staunton requesting her to purchase whatever she deemed requisite for a becoming wardrobe for his daughter and send the bills to him at —— Hotel. He said he hoped it would not require much time; he desired that she should come to the hotel with him as soon as possible; an unexpected occurrence had obliged him to go to Washington in the early train without affording him time to call at the Hall; he would only be absent a week or ten days; on his return he would make a satisfactory settlement with Mrs. Marvel for the *tuition of his daughter.*

Mrs. Marvel was not wholly insensible to the responsibility of her position. But the voice of conscience had become faint and indistinct from her repeated efforts to stifle it. It was now seldom listened to, except when awakened by self-love and human respect.

"What can be done for this girl now to make her appear decently in the hotel?" thought the lady. "I must not allow her to disgrace my establishment. I'll try what fashion can do! But she is so stupidly ignorant, so vulgarly boisterous, so self-opinionated, so rude, and so ready to join in conversation at all times.

No doubt she will ridicule the Hall and reveal its deficiencies. There is no remedy. I must put a bold face on it now, and put the blame where it belongs—upon her own head. I could make nothing of her. Ah! a thought comes to me. Dr. Blossom has seen her, and often no doubt remarked her uncontrollable disposition. I'll send for him and draw out his opinion, and will tell him it is absolutely necessary for the reputation of the establishment, that Mr. Staunton should understand where the fault lies, and no one can do this better than Doctor Blossom."

"Miss Waters," said Mrs. Marvel, speaking to that young lady, who had come to the parlor to give in her report of the previous day: "Miss Waters, please send Alph (the colored boy) for Doctor Blossom. Let him say that I desire him to come without delay to the Hall; and please see that Mary Staunton is dressed by eleven to go out with me."

"Her uniform is not fit to appear in," replied Miss Waters. "You remember she had no new one this year."

"Let her borrow one! I must not be delayed by her. I must have her wardrobe in order on the return of her father from Washington, which will be very soon."

"There is Doctor Blossom passing now," said Miss Waters, and she ran to the door to call him. A few moments more and Doctor Blossom and Mrs. Marvel were alone in the reception-room. Orders were given to admit no one.

Doctor Blossom "hoped that Mrs. Marvel was well and did not require his advice. Nothing pained him more than to be obliged to practice his profession; health was such a valuable boon that he could not wish

to see his bitterest foe deprived of it." This was said in his usual affected drawling tone, with an occasional pause between the words in his sentences in order to fix the attention of his listeners.

"No, Doctor, I never was in better health; but my mind, Doctor, my mind is greatly troubled this morning."

"Ah! permit me to inquire the proximate cause, madam. The mind is to the 'mortal coil' what the sun is to the solar system. When it is obscured, the most beautiful scenes of nature look dark and gloomy, and if this be your case, permit me to—hope that—I can—"

"Excuse me, Doctor," interrupted Mrs. Marvel; "my mind is very clear at present, and all the aid I require from you I must explain in a short time, and in a few words, having ordered my carriage at eleven;" (looking at her watch,) "it is now past ten."

Doctor Blossom, not at all disturbed by the interruption, bowed his head in assent, slowly wiped his moustache and folded his arms. He was at all times deliberate in the extreme, having once heard it asserted that deliberation was the mark of a gentleman.

"You have no doubt, Doctor, been struck with the awkward and vulgar manner of Mary Staunton," said Mrs. Marvel. The doctor bowed. "You must have perceived how deficient she is in natural abilities." She paused and the doctor bowed. "You have frequently remarked my attempts to control her obstinate spirit, and seen how utterly I have failed to do so." The doctor looked up a little puzzled, for he could not remember any instances. "You *must* have remarked it," repeated Mrs. Marvel in a decided tone. The doctor bowed. "You have witnessed my patient

struggles to teach her, and to inspire her with a love of duty, and you have witnessed my inability to impress her with a sense of the value of an education." Mrs. Marvel paused. The doctor could certainly say he had witnessed the failure, and he bowed again. "Well, sir," continued Mrs. Marvel, in an excited tone, "the parent returns after a long absence with wealth and position for this child—" The doctor unclasps his hands, lets them drop into his lap, draws his arm-chair a little nearer to Mrs. Marvel. "He finds her coarse and uneducated, and no doubt in his disappointment will blame me." The doctor bowed, a little less attentive in his manner, evidently turning over some thoughts of his own in his mind. "I wish you to seek an introduction to Mr. Staunton, Doctor, and disabuse him of the impression that any neglect could be attributed to *me*. You, being the physician of this Hall, can do so with propriety." Mrs. Marvel paused for a reply. The doctor hesitated a few moments; again applied his odoriferous kerchief to the object of his care, and then remarked:

"It would be wrong indeed to allow so unjust, injurious an impression to go abroad of this establishment, which reflects honor upon the head and heart of her by whom it is guided."

"You will then call upon Mr. Staunton," she continued, encouraged by Doctor Blossom's eulogy, "and in conversation let him understand that his daughter has found a home and a mother at Marvel Hall." The doctor bowed and fell into a reverie, from which he was aroused by the announcement that "the carriage was waiting, and that Miss Staunton was ready to accompany Mrs. Marvel."

Mrs. Marvel hastily threw on a large black lace

shawl, and tied on a becoming Neapolitan straw, and was ready to go with Mary to undertake the work of remodelling her exterior, which, alas! would only make the barrenness of the mind and heart more striking.

"Thank you," said Mrs. Marvel to the doctor, who politely handed her and Mary into the carriage, touching his hat to the latter, who held down her head and laughed, astonished at the new attention paid her. Mrs. Marvel made no remarks, but observed a strict silence during the ride. Having reached Madame Peignier's hair-dressing saloon, the coachman stopped, and descending from the box, threw open the carriage door. Both alighted at the hair-dresser's shop. Mary wondered what was to be done here, but dare not ask.

"Can you make any thing of that hair, Monsieur?" said Mrs. Marvel, pointing to Mary, and addressing a little Frenchman, scarcely higher than the chair behind which he stood, while dressing the hair of a lady who seemed half asleep from the process. He paused from his labor, looked at Mary a moment, shrugged his shoulders, and said:

"Me do my possible, Madame; but no tell how, till three or four times come. Please attend, Madame, and I finish soon, and den I try." François made the lady's hair upon which he was engaged look "beautifully," according to his ideas, though, according to her own, when she looked in the mirror, it was unnatural, stiff, and unbecoming. It was now poor Mary's turn. François politely asked her to take the seat the lady had left. He placed the cloth around her neck, drew the little table nearer to her, upon which were hair-pins, bandoline, soiled brushes, pomatum, and a pair of curling irons. In his own hair were the combs intended for use.

"Were you at the last masquerade, Madame, at Monsieur Piffett's?" inquired François in a familiar tone, while he commenced taking down and opening out Mary's tangled hair. "There were such bad taste, no French at all in some of dem, but the heads I dressed were beautiful, angelique. Oh! Madame, you would make splendid Marquise at a masquerade. I like to make you Marquise; that's my Marquise in the window, n'est elle pas gentille? One little lady dressed herself Marquise; but taste very bad. You large and would look magnifique."

Mrs. Marvel smiled, but made no remark.

"What shocking state, Mademoiselle, your hair come to; quel dommage! So fine and soft, but no pomatum, no hard brush, since long time, Mademoiselle. Mon Dieu, quel dommage! How you like that Madame Marvel?" asked François, presenting a fashion plate."

"Arrange it in plain braids, François, as simply as possible. I only came to have you give her a style to follow. She is going to ——— Hotel. If possible, I shall make her presentable there."

Mrs. Marvel was too much occupied in mind to pay much attention to François' remarks, and hinted several times that she desired to get through her morning engagements as early as possible. The cloth was at last removed from Mary's neck, and she was desired to look in the glass opposite, and see how she liked the arrangement. She scarcely recognized herself, so great a change had been made in her appearance by the neat and stylish manner in which her hair was dressed. "A little coloring in the eyebrows," said the Frenchman's wife, who came into the room at the moment when Mrs. Marvel was turning Mary from side to side —"a little ebony black tint in the brow. Madame,

try it?" Mary laughed, and covered her eyes with her hands.

"What is the matter with your eyebrows, Mary Staunton? What have you been doing, to add to your ugliness?" asked Mrs. Marvel.

"I burned them, in trying to put out Isabella's hair, which caught fire in the gas, last night," replied Mary.

"You must have something done to them," said Mrs. Marvel. "I could not let your father see you in such a state."

"Here is the tint," said Madame Peignier; "sit down, Miss; is not the effect wonderful?" The brows painted, madame put up two or three cakes of the tint in a box, and handed them to Mary. Again Mary glanced at herself, and was more astonished than before, and enjoyed the thought of the effect upon the girls, which her changed appearance would produce.

Mrs. Marvel stopped a moment to look in the case on the counter, in which were displayed cosmetics, lotions, rouge, nail powder, and various "beautifiers," as the school girls denominate them; and Mary would have purchased them all, had her taste been consulted. Again in the carriage, silence was observed as before, until the coachman stopped at Miss Arnold's fashionable dressmaking establishment, before whose door were two or three carriages, waiting for ladies who were ordering dresses made. Mrs. Marvel and her pupil entered. Near the window was a large lady, dressed in the *extreme* of fashion, talking in a low tone to her daughter, a timid girl of sixteen, commanding her to permit Miss Arnold to display her *own* taste in the style of her dress, and not to interpose her absurd notions of propriety, acquired at Mrs. Marlborough's school; notions, she feared, it would take years to re-

move. Near the centre-table, upon which lay the books of fashion, stood a delicate-looking girl, whose appearance would have led almost any one to suppose, that she had not many garments to prepare for this world, earnestly engaged in making out a memorandum for a trousseau.

"It must be white moire antique, trimmed with *real point*, Miss Arnold. I dislike imitation. Let the silk and trimmings of my evening dresses be the richest you can find. I would not for the world have cousin Annie's outfit better than mine; and mind you do not let her see one of my dresses. I would not have her know what my reception dress is to be, on any account. You know her well enough to know she would search the world to get a better one. Mind, now, I shall not have a happy moment till I know you have kept the secret."

Miss Arnold assured the young beauty that the secret should be kept; and, after a "good-morning, miss," turned to a lady dressed in deep mourning, who was waiting for her turn to speak to the patient dressmaker.

"I hope, Miss Arnold," said the lady in black, you will not disappoint me. I must sail in the next steamer for Europe, with my daughter. Her father's death has affected her health so much, that Dr. Root advises me to go with her to Italy, or the south of France, without delay, where he hopes the change of air and scene will soon restore her, although I fear there is no hope for her."

Miss Arnold had only time to promise prompt attention to her order, and express one word of sympathy; and then turned to a bevy of laughing girls, who were planning all kinds of mischief to be done by them

at the masquerade, for which they had come to consult the costumes, and get Miss Arnold to promise to keep her girls up all night, if need be, sooner than leave off one flounce or bow. These disposed of, fatigued, and with scarcely a distinct idea left in her mind, the dressmaker seated herself on the sofa near Mrs. Marvel, and inquired what she could do for her.

"Nothing for me," replied the lady, "but if you can make this child look a little more like a Christian, I will owe you a debt of gratitude. Now what must I buy? how soon can her dresses be finished? and when can you send them and your bill to Marvel Hall? Use your own taste in the making and trimming. The bill will be paid. Send it receipted."

Miss Arnold knew that not one of those who had been with her previous to this order would pay for the dresses when sent home. The money would be an object to her.

"I will attend to your order first," replied Miss Arnold. "This day week you may expect them."

"That will do," said Mrs. Marvel. "Her father, Mr. Staunton, will return from Washington about that time; that will do; but when you have one dress finished, please send it, for the child has not one in which she can appear in the parlor."

Mary was called over to the table, and her dimensions taken, and noted down on paper; some advice was given respecting more care of her figure, and means recommended which would lessen the size of her waist.

Mrs. Marvel and Mary left the house. A new party was met at the door coming in, and so it continued all day, and sometimes till a late hour of the evening. It was always past midnight before Miss Arnold

laid her head upon her pillow; and it was too often, only to turn from side to side, endeavoring in vain to shut out from her over-fatigued brain, visions of dress and vanity, which floated before her imagination in all their vapory emptiness.

Mrs. Marvel and Mary once more at Marvel Hall, we will leave them after the hall door is closed behind them, and return to our little Alice, who is still an invalid with the kind Mrs. Root. A letter from her father has come to Mrs. Marvel, full of gratitude for the attention his little daughter received at Marvel Hall! at the same time came one to Dr. Root, assuring him that Mrs. Stanley could not express her thanks to them, for having taken her place by the side of her sick child.

"Please say to Mrs. Root, for myself and my dear wife," wrote Mr. Stanley, "that we find it impossible to say how grateful we feel for having good friends, who have taken our place by the side of our dear Alice, whom I dare not say how much, and how tenderly, we love. God grant, dear Doctor, that you may never want a friend! Mrs. Stanley is improving slowly. I hope in a few weeks that she will be able to travel. My intention is to go to Switzerland with her. I trust Alice will be well enough to accompany us. I must not delay our trip later than the last of August. If it were possible, I would go to see her. At present I do not leave the house longer than is positively necessary for my business, lest a change should occur during my absence, that would be unfavorable to my dear wife. The good news, in your letter received to-day, of Alice's gradual improvement, has given us great happiness. Be assured, dear sir, of the grateful affection

"Of your faithful servant

"Louis Stanley."

CHAPTER VIII.

A WEEK after Mrs. Marvel had ordered dresses made for Mary, a pale, delicately-formed, care-worn looking young girl, with a large bundle in her arms, rang the bell at Marvel Hall, just at evening. The door was opened; she entered, and was told to go to Mrs. Marvel's room, where she was desired to open her parcel, and lay the dresses upon the bed. One was a cherry and black grenadine, the other, a delicate rose-colored muslin. Both were gaudily and elaborately trimmed, not made (it must in justice be said) as the dressmaker would have made them, had her own taste directed her, but in accordance with what she knew Mrs. Marvel would call genteel. An order was sent to Mary to come to Mrs. Marvel's room.

"Mary Staunton," said Mrs. Marvel, "here are two of your dresses, which I wish you to try on. They have just come in time. Not five minutes since, I received a note from your father, telling me that he had returned from Washington and would be here this evening. What does your hair look like? What hands! Here, let me unhook your dress. Not a hook upon it! You irretrievable slattern, what a name you will give my establishment! Just look at that girl's neck, scratched like cat tracks from the pins in the top of her dress, just because she is too idle to sew on an eye! Well!

well! Don't blame *me* when you are gone for not teaching you tidiness and industry. I've talked until my chest pained me, and what good has it done?" By this time Mary had pulled one of the dresses over her head, and was too much taken up with the grand figure she would cut before her father, to heed the monotonous stream of sound that was issuing from the half-closed mouth of Mrs. Marvel.

"It does not come within a mile of closing, Miss Mott," said Mrs. Marvel, in an angry tone. "You might have known that her elephant figure could never have been squeezed into that bodice."

Mary held in her breath, pressed her dress tightly to her waist, while Mrs. Marvel pulled, and dragged, and twisted Mary around in her efforts to get the hook to meet the eye. It would come almost to the point, when Mary with the faintest kind of breathing would jerk the dress apart again. She held in her breath once more, until her eyes filled with tears at the effort; once more Mrs. Marvel applied her fore fingers and thumbs to each side of the dress and made a desperate effort.

"There!" exclaimed Mrs. Marvel, putting the edge of the hook to the eye; but Mary sneezed, and away went the hook and eye to the other side of the room, and Mary was aroused by a severe blow upon the back.

"You have torn my finger-nails from the roots," screamed Mrs. Marvel, in a bitter tone, putting her aching fingers involuntarily to her mouth. "I do not know what to do with this creature," she continued. "There is the bell; no doubt her father has come."

Miss Mott, without saying a word, took off the dress, and in a few moments had let out a seam which enabled her to close it upon Mary after a great deal of labor.

"Be very careful, Miss, not to move about much; the dress is an admirable fit and is very becoming," said Miss Mott. "Do you not admire to look at it now, Mrs. Marvel?" Mrs. Marvel had not recovered her good-nature enough to admire any thing, but had to acknowledge she never had seen her figure half so small. Mr. Staunton had come. Mary walked slowly to the parlor. Every step she took added a new agony to her poor imprisoned body, and sent the blood to her face and swollen hands to a painful degree. She met her father with an unmeaning effort at a smile, and seated herself by his side. Panting for breath, she could scarcely articulate. A long sentence was sure to give her a cramp in the side. Her father looked at her flaunting, gaudy, unbecoming dress, and found it difficult to conceal the disgust her appearance caused him. But her vacant mind gave him too much sorrow of heart to allow him to indulge in unhappiness for what could be so easily remedied as an unbecoming robe.

"You are suffering, my dear," said her father, "and I beg you will go to Mrs. Marvel and ask for relief; then return. I have only a short time to remain."

Mary was too glad to escape to refuse the opportunity. She was no sooner in the hall than she burst the dress open and drew a full breath, thinking that she never before knew the luxury of freedom! Borrowing a light shawl from one of the school girls, who was passing at the time, she returned to the parlor, and again by her father's side entered into an unreserved conversation with him, showing in her character much self-will, an undisciplined heart, an uncultivated mind, an erroneous judgment, and a *total* absence of religious training; but with these he discovered also quickness of perception, a great deal of enthusiasm, and depth of feeling.

"Mrs. Marvel," said Mr. Staunton, when that lady entered the parlor beaming with smiles, "I hope it will be convenient for you to allow Mary to go to —— Hotel to-morrow. If Mr. Marvel will accompany her and bring with him your bills, I will be happy to give him a satisfactory settlement of our long-standing account. Would to God our account at the last day could be as easily settled!" he added with emphasis and feeling.

Mrs. Marvel was not "*a professor of religion*," and did not examine her motives and acts scrupulously; but she felt a disagreeable self-accusation for having neglected the child, and the sooner she was out of her sight, the sooner could she close the door against conscience. Appearing not to have heard the last remark she smiled again, and hoped "Miss Staunton would be ready on the following day."

Mr. Staunton arose, bade good evening, and kissed Mary affectionately, which brought the color to her face, so new and strange to her was the sensation produced by these marks of parental love.

The following day Mary Staunton stood in the centre of the school-room, in recreation time, dressed in a light pink muslin dress, blue crape hat covered with flowers, yellow gloves, and a black silk mantilla. Proud of her enviable position, and conscious of her freedom, she was bold in her loud invectives against Marvel Hall, Miss Knight, and the greater number of her school companions; while she made promises of boxes of cake and candy to some others, and a new dress to Bridget, who stood at the head of the kitchen stairs, wiping her streaming eyes ready to say, "Good-bye to poor Miss Mary!"—"Don't forget *me!*"—"Don't forget *me!*"—was called out by a half-dozen wee

voices that came from the little girls in aprons, who were half smothered in the crowd of big girls around Mary.

"Good-bye!"—"Good-bye!"—"Good-bye to Mary Staunton!"—was heard in the school-room long after she had closed the door, and gone to the parlor to wait for Mr. Marvel, who was always "just on the point of coming," but never arriving until every one was tired looking for him. Then the little man appeared, a poor miserable-looking, sallow, smooth-faced, soulless, insignificant appendage to the establishment, who had married Mrs. Marvel to be supported, and who was perfectly contented to eat, drink, sleep, and smoke—and eat, drink, sleep, and smoke again—not caring a fig what the world thought.

"Now, Miss Mary," piped Mr. Marvel, "permit me." He took the tip of Mary's finger and handed her into the carriage. Mr. Marvel had received orders not to converse with the young ladies, and he *had been taught* to obey them strictly. The beautiful furnished rooms engaged for Mary at —— Hotel might have elated one accustomed to luxuries; but to one who had known scarcely the comforts of life, they were exciting in the extreme. Her parlor looked out on Broadway; and it appeared to her when she entered it, that heaven could offer but little more than seemed now open to her enjoyment. She walked up and down before the large mirror, and wondered if it could be really Mary Staunton whose figure she saw reflected in it. After turning round and round to view herself on every side, she sat down on one of the crimson-covered Turkish chairs that stood in the centre of the room opposite the mirror. Taking off her bonnet she threw it carelessly upon a sofa, threw off her shawl and left it on

the floor by her side, and tossed her gloves upon the mantel-piece. Mr. Marvel had gone to the office to find Mr. Staunton. Mary sat swinging her feet to and fro at a rapid rate, while she was scrutinizing every thing in the room; its curiosities—furniture—and the figures on the carpet—all were of interest to her. A knock at the door startled her. She sprang from the chair, and with two steps across the room fell against the door before opening it. A colored man announced that dinner would be ready in a few moments. Mary stared at him, and made no answer. He bowed respectfully and walked to the next door. Mary shut the door and laughed heartily.

"That's comical," said she, "how am I to know where dinner is to be found?"

She noticed a silver card-case that stood upon the étagere. In it she found a card upon which was written in a fine hand:

"Doctor Solon Blossom's compliments to Miss Mary Staunton; will do himself the pleasure of calling upon her this evening when he hopes she will allow him an introduction to her father." She was reading the card when Mr. Staunton entered accompanied by the meek Mr. Marvel, who glided into the room and slid into a chair near the centre-table.

Mary handed the card to her father, which she said she found in the silver shell. He glanced at it, and without a remark laid it on the table. He turned to Mr. Marvel, and asked him for his account. The bills were presented, paid without a comment, though extravagant, and a receipt was given by Mr. Marvel.

Mr. Staunton felt relieved when he had gone, and he saw the door closed against further intercourse with Marvel Hall, which he regarded as the most unscrupu-

lous imposition palmed upon unsuspecting and careless parents.

"You have been robbed, my child, of what it will never be in my power to restore to you. But you are yet young enough to do much for yourself, if you have the disposition to do it."

"Robbed, father," exclaimed Mary; "I do not understand you; it appears to me that I never had half so much as I have now. Who has robbed me?"

"Your time, my child, has been squandered. You are ignorant and uncultivated. The season of childhood has been allowed to pass without the cultivation of those virtues which alone can make you happy here or hereafter."

Mary's look of astonishment showed her father how little she comprehended the truth of his remarks.

The gong sounded. Mr. Staunton and Mary entered the dining-room appropriated to private families, and were shown the seats reserved for them. The table spread before her was, to Mary, like the feasts of the genii. She was puzzled to know what to do with the bill of fare, which she saw several reading around her. But following their example she picked it up and holding it before her face rested her elbows on the table and displayed her large coarse hands, not to advantage certainly. A waiter stood behind her, "Soup, Miss?" "What?" said Mary, not understanding the question, and turning her large black eyes upon him, "Soup, Miss?" She nodded her head, and smiled familiarly. Crumbling her bread into the soup she began eating it *à la pension*. Mr. Staunton was mortified, but appeared to take no notice of this breach of good manners. Again Mary was puzzled; she was asked by the same waiter what she would take, and of all the dishes she

had ever seen or heard of, not one would now come to her mind. The more she thought, the more embarrassed she became.

"Look at your bill of fare," said her father, pointing at the paper near her plate. Mary glanced at it, and asked for the first dish she could comprehend. By this time she had attracted the attention of several who sat near them. A lady in green spectacles opposite "wondered what quarter of the globe so awkward a piece of vulgarity came from. Who can she be?" Mr. Staunton's face crimsoned; he heard the remark and replied in a gentlemanly tone:

"Madam, though a stranger to you, allow me to satisfy your curiosity and introduce to you my daughter, Mary Staunton; and at the same time allow me to inform you that she has spent the greater part of her life in the city of New York, at the fashionable and far-famed Marvel Hall." The lady gave a nervous little cough, raised her glasses a little, wiped her eyes, put them on again, and replied in an embarrassed tone:

"I was not addressing you, sir; my remarks were intended for my neighbor's ear; but since you have heard them, I have no objection. Can't believe the young lady is your daughter. Could sooner believe her a pupil of Marvel Hall."

Here the conversation ended. Mary ate her dinner with an appetite worthy of a school-girl dining out; and before leaving the table filled her pockets with nuts, raisins, figs, and prunes, taking an orange also, which she tossed from one hand to the other while walking the full length of the dining-hall by the side of her stately and dignified father, whose face burned with mortification. Mr. Staunton had long since learned self-control, and the lack of wisdom there was in acting too hastily

in any thing. He made up his mind to watch Mary closely for a time, and learn her character and disposition thoroughly, before he would set about correcting the defects. "I'll leave her free to act according to her impulses until I have learned what they are," thought he, while he walked slowly to their apartments. She rushed into the room with an awkward jump, and expressed her delight by handling and displacing every thing upon the étagere, pulling the curtains out of their folds, wheeling the chairs upon their castors, trying first one and then another, and finally flinging herself full-length upon a crimson satin sofa without any regard to the dust upon her boots, which she had not changed since she had returned from a walk in the morning to the hair-dresser's with Miss Mott."

"Mercy on us!" said Mary, "I wonder what the girls would think of that dinner at Marvel Hall! I'm half-dead, father, from all I have eaten; and here I've got my pockets full of nuts, and rasins, and stuff. What on earth will I do with them? What a horrid old fudge that was opposite us? I could not keep my eyes off from [redacted]reen spectacles. I'll be bound she never talks of the fashions. Did you see what an old-fashioned cape she wore, and such a collar! I do not see the use of people's making scarecrows of themselves. Oh! I'm so sleepy I can hardly keep my eyes open!" (Mr. Staunton had seated himself near the light, and appeared to be reading, but was listening attentively to Mary's remarks.) "I guess the bell has rung now at Marvel Hall. What time is it, father?"

"It is half-past seven, my dear," replied Mr. Staunton, in a gentle voice, quite a contrast to Mary's gruff, loud manner of speaking.

"Half-past seven," repeated Mary. "Yes, that old

sugar-plum, Miss Knight, is walking up and down the study hall now, *trying* to catch one of the big girls whispering, or one of the little ones nodding. It was no news to take me by the ear and walk me over to the idler's seat. I could not bear Mrs. Marvel, nor Miss Knight, and dozens of others; and I used to be real saucy when I didn't know my lessons. Then I was sent into solitude. The only time Miss Waters was allowed to speak to me was when I was in punish-class with her. So I used to try to get there just to talk to her. I loved her. She is an a[redacted] (Mr. Staunton looked up from his book and n[redacted] last remark in his mind.) I love her, and I kno[redacted] been good if Mrs Marvel hadn't hated me so. I know she hated me cordially; and she didn't deny it. I've heard her say a hundred times, 'I can't bear that child!' (Mr. Staunton walked up and down the room with his arms behind him); and I could not *bear* her. I do hate her so I could see her dead!" said Mary, starting from the sofa, flushed with excitement.

"Mary! Mary!" said her father; "take back that sinful word and ask God's forgiveness."

Mary paused; it was new language to her.

"I can't help it, father. Look at my arm; there is the mark of her cruelty. She held me so tight, one day, she left the print of her fingers there; and I bit her for it. Yes, she found I had teeth; and then I was pointed at by every one in the school, and hated; and even the little children would whisper when I passed them, and avoid me. Yes, father, I do hate her; and you ought to hate her. She made me wicked by her treatment; and I'm only sorry for one thing I did. I'll tell you that, for I know you won't scold me, father."

Mr. Staunton took her hand and held it tightly be-

tween his own. "What did you do, my dear, for which you are sorry?" he inquired in an encouraging tone; "tell me without fear, and tell me all?"

Mary hesitated; her courage was leaving her. Temptations suggested the consequences of the confession. She meant to have told her father that she had thrown little Alice into spasms by pinching and frightening her after awakening her from a sound sleep; and she hoped she had not injured her; but more than once her conscience had awakened fears that troubled her, and which she could not stifle.

"[redacted]y dear," said Mr. Staunton, seeing her hesit[redacted] Do not fear me."

"I cried 'fire,'" said Mary, "and frightened the girls and little Alice Stanley, who was very sick, was left alone a half an hour."

Mr. Staunton was greatly relieved; the pressure of his hands was relaxed, and Mary, who felt she had got nicely out of a difficult position, withdrew her hand from her father's, and looking in his face, encountered his steady gaze. He had watched her expression, and feared he detected deception in it; but unwilling to decide rashly he was suspending judgment. A knock at the door! The servant announced Dr. Blossom, who was waiting to be admitted. The sleek, odoriferous young man entered, and with an obsequious bow, presented Miss Staunton a bouquet, which he held in his hand. She took it awkwardly, and was puzzled to know exactly how to go through the form of an introduction, although she had seen a thousand. She stood with her mouth open, and looking first at her father and then at Dr. Blossom.

"Mr. Staunton, I presume," said Dr. Blossom, in an affected tone.

Mr. Staunton bowed, and replied, "Yes, sir; to whom have I the honor of an introduction?"

"Solon Blossom, M.D., confidential physician of the renowned Academy of Marvel Hall; where young ladies receive a course of study, academic and collegiate, which will enable them to cope with the mightiest intellects of mighty man; who for ages has been trampling under foot the bright genius of feminine capacity, which Phœnix-like is now rising from her own ashes, resplendent and glorious as Venus, whose mantle is spangled with jewels of science, and clasped with the breast-plate of Independence, which will resist the arrows of man's scorn and blunt the spears of his anathemas against the onward progress of woman's mind and intellect." Solon drew a long breath after this speech, and sauntered to a seat near the one from which Mr. Staunton had risen. Mr. Staunton looked up with an expression of contempt it was difficult to conceal, but which he expressed by very monosyllabic replies to the gentleman's remarks.

"It must vivify the pleasurable capacities of your existence, Mr. Staunton, to be once more permitted to gaze on the budding beauty of your interesting daughter." Mr. Staunton looked up to see if Dr. Blossom intended to insult him. Solon read the inquiry in his face, and continued:

"Youth, lovely youth, is beauty. Your daughter is like the lily of the valley, that has bloomed unseen. The full blaze of a noon-day sun will reveal its delicacy." Dr. Blossom paused, drew his handkerchief from his side pocket, and wiped his moustache.

Mr. Staunton, though seldom irritated, felt a great desire to kick the impertinent, ignorant pedant out of

his presence; but this could not be done, and he replied:

"I do not understand you, sir! My daughter has been sadly neglected; or I must think her natural abilities very trifling. I do not agree with you, that Marvel Hall is a place where a young lady may receive a good education. I cannot say what the course is, but I am convinced it is a superficial one, and that the cultivation of the better qualities of the heart is totally neglected."

"The heart," whined the coxcomb—"the heart of woman is more inexplicable and unfathomable than the ocean. Its pearls lie deep; he who would bring them to light, must dive deep and fearlessly."

"Are you a married man?" inquired Mr. Staunton, scarcely deigning a glance at the fellow, while Mary sat cracking nuts with her teeth, and after eating the contents threw the shells into the grate. She took little interest in the conversation, because she could not comprehend the high-flown language of the wonderfully le[illegible]Blossom.

"[illegible] married man," replied Dr. Blossom in a drawling tone," I am wedded to the human race, not to individual woman. I am wedded to my profession; to love, honor, and obey its commands to a letter, and she gives me her heart and her unselfish love. I am wedded to my country whose banners float in every clime. But I am not wedded to fickle woman, Mr. Staunton, who would bind me to obey the twinkle of her coquettish eye."

"How long am I to be bored with this consummate fool?" thought Mr. Staunton. Scarcely had the thought crossed his mind, when a servant entered and handed Dr. Root's card.

"Dr. Root? ask him to walk up," said Mr. Staun-

ton. "I will be most happy to see him. No doubt he is the father of the agreeable and worthy young gentleman of that name with whom I crossed the ocean."

Dr. Blossom always felt withered in the presence of Dr. Root, and avoided a meeting when it could be done. There was something in the honest, noble bearing of the good old doctor, that made Doctor Blossom's insignificance uncomfortably apparent even to himself.

"Good evening, sir," said Dr. Blossom, rising and leaving the room, scarcely noticing Mary, who was still eating the *bon-bons* from her pocket.

"Put away those nuts, my child," said Mr. Staunton, "and endeavor to make yourself agreeable to visitors who call. At all events listen with interest, if you cannot join in the conversation."

Dr. Root and his sons entered; the latter introducing their father to Mr. Staunton, and he in turn introducing his daughter to the young gentlemen, who immediately seated themselves near Mary, while the doctor and Mr. Staunton entered into a pleasant conversation upon his voyage, arrival, &c.

Mary blushed, turned crimson, and grew embarrassed. Her face became almost expressionless, until the first awkwardness of timidity was removed by the affable and encouraging manner of Everett, who began a conversation after the usual inquiries of her health, the weather, &c., by asking her if she knew Miss Sinclair, at Marvel Hall.

"Oh yes! Isabella Sinclair you mean," said Mary, "she is one of the best girls in the school, too good; never breaks a rule; never misses a lesson. I don't fancy such perfection myself, for the teachers always bring her up as an example,—not to me, for they knew I would not follow the best." Mary laughed, and Hal

smiled, while he looked at the young girl, the very reverse of what he had pictured the daughter of Irene Staunton, the beautiful, the gifted wife, of whom Mr. Staunton had given them a history.

"But why do you ask for *her?*" said Mary; "do you know her?"

"No," replied Everett, "but that little fairy, Alice, at our house talks of her so much, I have half lost my heart."

"Well, you may as well keep it," said Mary, who, if not educated in other respects, had learned a little of the arts of love from her young friend Susan, whose letters she gave to Willie Sutherland.

"You may as well keep it," said Mary, "for Isabella is engaged; but for your life don't say I said so, or I'll be half-killed when I see her."

This was a fabrication of Mary's own manufacture at the moment, to prevent Everett's admiration being bestowed upon her young friend.

"Ah! is that so?" asked Everett.

"As true as I am a living girl," replied Mary.

"That's true enough," answered Everett, laughing.

"Who is the favored one?" inquired Hal, who, till now, had not spoken.

"I can't tell," said Mary. "Perhaps when I am better acquainted with you I will tell you."

"Do you return to Marvel Hall?" asked Hal.

"Never, I hope; I'd rather die. I suppose Alice has talked of me to you?" continued Mary, forgetting all diffidence.

Hal looked puzzled, and Everett laughed.

"Oh, I know she has; she has reason to dislike me, and I'm sure she does. Children and fools speak the truth, they say. I had no one but her to torment

when I missed my lessons, and had to study them out of hours; and if Alice or any other little girl came in my way at that time, I did not stop to put her out of it very gently; and the little simpleton got afraid of me! ha! ha! ha!"

Everett remarked that children took up strange ideas, and related some of his own experience at college, which enabled him to avoid confessing what Annie had told him Alice had said of Mary.

Mr. Staunton, who caught an occasional sentence, could see that he had but little reason to be proud of the impression his daughter was making upon the young gentlemen, and a sigh interrupted his conversation with Dr. Root.

The doctor invited him and his daughter to dine with him on the following day, and making a passing remark to Mary of the happiness she must now enjoy, he rose to depart, pleased with Mr. Staunton, in whom he found an agreeable intelligent companion. Hal said he hoped he would have the pleasure of seeing Mary on the following day; and Everett desired her to remember Marvel Hall in her dreams that night! They left, and Mary yawned aloud before the door was closed.

Mr. Staunton advised her to prepare to retire as soon as possible; and said he would have fewer interruptions in the morning, when he intended to examine her in the studies she had pursued at the Hall.

Mary laughed at the idea, and replied that "the *first* question would scare all the knowledge out of her head."

Mr. Staunton smiled and kissed her affectionately, and bade her good night. When left alone, Mary looked at the beautiful little room, hung in light blue

satin damask, and the luxuriously prepared bed, over which was hung a white lace canopy. And she wondered if so great a change as the last week had effected was real, or was she in a delicious dream from which she would awake?

Mary arose in the morning with a strange feeling, and happy to find herself so comfortable after the disagreeable visions of hair-breadth escapes from detections and punishments at Marvel Hall.

After breakfast, which was taken in the same awkward manner as the dinner of the previous day, she opened her trunks, which had been packed by one of the teachers, and amused herself in examining her new wardrobe, while her father was engaged in the parlor with gentlemen who had called on business. She laid out her dresses upon the bed, examined each critically, and was unable to control her delight at the idea of the "magnificent," "divine," "superb" display she would make in them. "What would I not give," thought Mary, "to have some of those girls at the Hall peep in here and see me now? Mary Staunton wouldn't turn round to look at one of them if a score walked in this minute," said she aloud tossing her head on one side disdainfully. "What a lovely fit!" trying on a light gaiter boot and holding up her foot to look at it. "Not much like the old slip-shods I left at the Hall," she whispered, and then laughed heartily. "I wonder what they will say when they come across them in the dormitory? pitch them out of the window, I suppose; just where Mrs. Marvel would like to have pitched me a hundred times." Taking out a box of collars she put on one and another; and standing before the glass to see their effect, she could not help wishing she was not so *very* plain looking. "I would like to know what

father thinks of me; he has not said I was very ugly, but I know I am, and he must see it."

Mr. Staunton knocked at Mary's door, and was struck with her unlady-like appearance, decked as she was in parts of half a dozen costumes, without any regard to harmony of colors or what would become her.

"A young lady has called upon you, Mary," said he. "The daughter of one of my intimate friends is in the parlor. I hope my dear you will make yourself agreeable to Miss Ellsworth."

"Agreeable! father; *I* make myself agreeable? Wouldn't the girls laugh at the idea!"

Mary was dressed in a canary-colored barege, flounced to the waist, a white lace cape decorated with bows and streamers from the shoulders, of green and red ribbons, and a blue chenille head-dress. Her face was flushed and covered with red spots, and her hands were nearly purple from the tightness of her dress, which had taxed the strength of the chambermaid to hook.

"My daughter Mary, Miss Ellsworth," said Mr. Staunton, introducing his daughter, when Mary entered the room, to the lovely young girl the very opposite of poor Mary in every respect.

"Please call me Ida," said the young lady, "and I will call your daughter Mary."

Ida was dressed in a pale blue lawn of the finest texture, a white chip hat whose only trimming was a wreath of white roses, a mantilla of Indian muslin, light blue kid gloves, and light gaiter boots. In her hand she held an embroidered handkerchief, and a silver card case. A small bouquet of forget-me-not and mignionette, was fastened in her belt. A gold chain around her neck to which was suspended a heavy gold cross

was the only ornament upon her person. Her hair was dark brown, arranged with care, but with studied simplicity. Her complexion was beautifully fair and delicate. Her large hazel eyes beamed with intelligence; and an almost angelic innocence and sweetness in their expression at first sight captivated and won the heart. Her mouth—we can't describe it—was one of bewitching beauty. With all these gifts, to which was added talent, there was so much humility, so much forgetfulness of self in her nature, that all who saw her acknowledged her lovely.

How unlike Mary, who sat down by her side, and, struck by her beauty, stared at her without saying a word for a moment.

In Mr. Staunton's mind, painful thoughts were suggested by the contrast. The parent's pride was crushed, and his heart was desponding. He thanked God, however, that he loved his child still—perhaps the more tenderly for her misfortune. Misfortune it might justly be called. He would do his best to raise the down-trodden, crushed, withered flower; and in time the heat and sun and dews of Heaven would restore it to life.

Ida was greatly disappointed in the appearance of the daughter of Mr. Staunton. At the first glance she saw her want of cultivation, but her good heart prevented her from allowing Mary to notice it. She drew Mary into conversation, and by her kind manners made her feel that she was "one of the girls," with whom she could become well acquainted in half an hour.

"I've just got a whole set of new dresses, all made in the latest fashion, wouldn't you like to see them? Come, come in here, I'll show them to you," said Mary,

pulling Ida familiarly by the sleeve. Ida smiled, and replied, "she liked to look at pretty things."

"You will be kind enough to remember," said Mr. Staunton, in a pleasant voice, "that Mary has been all her life in a boarding-school. A new wardrobe must naturally excite her admiration for a time. You can, I know, pardon her desire that you should share her pleasure, Miss Ellsworth."

"Certainly, sir," replied Ida; "I plead guilty myself to the weakness of being fond of looking at the fashions, although I was never at boarding-school."

"Never at boarding-school!" exclaimed Mary. "I wish you could have seen me at boarding-school! Were you *never* at boarding-school? Well it is a queer place; you haven't seen as much as I have, then, after all. You don't look as if you had been knocked about much. I can tell you boarding-school is the place to try what you are made of. You wouldn't look so sweet long, with a set of wild girls tearing you to pieces if you didn't do as they wished."

"The advantages you gain by education at boarding-school are very superior to those at home, I presume," said Ida.

"I do not know about that," replied Mary; "all I know is that in all our school there were not half a dozen who ever studied much; and *they* were queer creatures who never had any fun. None of the girls liked them. The other girls learned their parts for the day of examination, and got through pretty well. Mr. Alsop told them just what he would ask them. But Mr. Goodacre, the linguist, positively refused to examine his classes. Mr. Devini made a great time six weeks before his great *soirée*, and a great many girls lost more than half their lessons to practise a grand

chorus. Oh! I tell you it is a hard thing to get a hundred girls to learn much. When they are thrown together and can't get any pleasure but what they *make*, they are busy enough plotting mischief of one kind and another." Mary had rattled on at a rapid rate, until she was out of breath. She closed the door of her bed-room and turned over one thing after another, and handed them to Ida to inspect. Ida pronounced this "very pretty," and that "very handsome," but Mary was not satisfied. "How *cold* you are," said Mary, "why I think that superb. I'm sure it is more than pretty. Is not that perfume sublime? only put some on your handkerchief." Ida objected, but Mary half deluged her in "Jockey Club," and thrust a bottle of "Balm of a Thousand Flowers" into her pocket. It will take off any pimples or freckles," said Mary. "I'm going to try it to-night. Here, don't you want one of these gold hair-pins? they are magnificent."

"Thank you," replied Ida, amused, "I never wear ornaments in my hair."

"You are a queer girl," said Mary. "Well, take it any how; I've more here, and father has plenty of money; I can get them whenever I want them." Ida declined politely, and was obliged to hasten from the room, so overpowering was the perfume with which Mary had favored her.

"What's the matter," said Mary, emptying a lap full of things on the bed and going towards Ida.

"I feel weak," said Ida; "and will go to the parlor window a moment if you will excuse me."

"Excuse you? why yes, you need not be so polite to me; go, of course. I'll be there in a minute."

"Is Miss Ellsworth ill?" inquired Mr. Staunton anxiously

"She is weak," said Mary. "I never was weak but once, and that was the other night when my clothes were too tight; I guess she is laced too tight."

Ida could not help smiling, although she blushed and shook her head. As soon as she was restored by the fresh air, she explained that she was unaccustomed to perfume, and had been made sick by the profusion of it. She invited Mary to come very soon to visit her, and remarked, when leaving the room, that her call had been much longer than she had intended it should be, and hoped it had not been an intrusion at so early an hour. Mary thought this all very unnecessary. She didn't see why one hour was not as good as another when there were no lessons to study. The father's thoughts, while slowly returning to his room after accompanying Miss Ellsworth to her carriage, had been saddened by the striking contrast between his daughter Mary and Ida. There is no time to be lost. Where is the remedy? how can it be accomplished? were the questions which he had revolved in his mind again and again, since the evening that his child stood before him in the parlor at Marvel Hall. He had resolved—and wisely—to allow her the unchecked expression of her ideas and thoughts until he should become acquainted with her heart.

He had learned already, that a deplorable superficial knowledge of the ordinary branches of geography, grammar, universal history, and arithmetic, was all that she had acquired, and that she had acquired these parrot-like, by a routine of class recitations without note or comment, (all questions asked by the pupils while in class being punished by marks in the black book, and the teachers being out of sight or occupied out of class,) a few phrases of French badly pronounced had been

taught her by the over-taxed patience of an old French professor, who came three times a week to be ridiculed and tortured by a class of wild, idle, mischievous school girls, and was often sent home covered with bits of paper cut in the shape of feathers stuck in his gray hair, which achievement, with many other tricks, were performed while the old man was industriously engaged in correcting badly prepared exercises, which, "do his possible," could not be understood.

Mr. Staunton had warned Mary on the previous evening, that he would give her an examination in her studies. She had not forgotten it. The dreaded investigation made her tremble. She feared her father's disappointment and displeasure. But there was no hope of escape, and she had made up her mind that the sooner it was over the better. When he returned to the parlor, after bidding Ida "good-morning," he found Mary engaged in hunting up her books, which Miss Waters had told her were packed in the bottom of the blue trunk. He seated himself near the window, and had fallen into a reverie when Mary came from the bedroom with her arms full of greasy, soiled, torn books, and some half sheets of music which showed signs of having been roughly used.

"What is the cause of these singular holes in your music, my dear?" asked her father, taking the popular song of "Oh! I'll remember thee" from her dilapidated collection. Mary laughed so heartily, that she sank upon the floor, letting her books fall around her in every direction, and could not speak for some moments; at length, she replied:

"Oh! father! those are the prints of my teeth; I used to get so mad when I could not play those flats, I could not help biting the music, and then I'd go on

pretty well a while. 'Oh! I'll remember thee,'" hummed Mary. Mr. Staunton desired her in a sadder tone than usual, to rise from the floor. Mary felt the influence of his manner, and rose hastily, continuing to sing the air, '*Oh! I'll remember thee*,' scarcely knowing what she was doing. Her father told her to go to the piano, and sing the song for him. Mr. Staunton stood behind her and listened with attention. The tones of her voice were deep, full, and musical; and awoke memories of the past that overcame him; that voice was so like the voice of her angelic mother; all resemblance to her had not been blotted out. There was this one trace left in the picture; and might not the beauty of the whole be restored in time? He clasped Mary in his arms when she had concluded the last line, and wept. There had been a pent-up weight oppressing his heart since he first saw Mary at Marvel Hall which he had struggled to support, and the tones of Mary's voice soothed him and gave him hope for the future, foreshadowing hours of enjoyment in days to come. Mary could not understand her father's caresses and emotion, although her large dark eyes were suffused with tears of sympathy.

"*I* will be patient with you, Mary," said her father in a low tone, "and you must try to improve, my child."

CHAPTER IX.

Before two weeks had passed the father's strength to keep the promise which closed the last chapter was severely tested. Mr. Staunton remarked among the many boarders at the hotel, several gayly attired ladies, married and single, who appeared to be wholly engrossed in the vain display of their personal attractions. The pretty coquettish glances with which they favored the gentlemen around them—even the youngest aspirants to their good graces—and to which their husbands seemed singularly blind, gave Mr. Staunton but little respect for their heads or hearts. He warned Mary against an intimacy with several whom he pointed out to her as weak and frivolous; but the prohibition seemed only to stimulate her desire to seek their society. Among the number was Mrs. Eva Ellory. She had been an old pupil of Marvel Hall, and had known Mary there; had been two seasons a belle, for whom many hearts sighed. At the watering places of the north and south, judging from the accounts given at the time by newspaper-reporters, she had attracted more attention by her expensive and beautiful attire than any other young lady of the season. Her wit and beauty also were no less a theme of praise Envious mammas put their heads together and whispered, that they were thankful their daughters, if not so beautiful, were not

so heartless as Eva, and that they would pity the poor victim who should fall into her net.

Frank Ellory, a young merchant of reputed wealth, was the accepted lover of the youthful beauty. During the time of their engagement he was loved and admired, neglected and repelled, recalled and accepted again, as the humor of the coquette dictated. Strange as it may appear, though a man of nerve and honor among men, and one with whom no man could trifle, yet with Eva he was the submissive slave of her whims, a toy which she might keep or toss away at pleasure. Time passed, and the day came, however, when he, as the happy lover, led her to the altar. A more beautiful bride in form and feature had never knelt there. His mother and sweet sister, Lucy, admired her, but did not rejoice, although others present predicted fair and happy days to the favored groom.

It was Eva's wish to spend the first year of their married life at a fashionable hotel; and the wish had been granted. Mary soon became the confidante of the young wife. There was but little left of Mrs. Marvel's character to admire, after Mary had given to Eva her experience at the Hall since Eva left, and Eva had told to Mary many incidents of her own life there; strange ones, even Mary allowed! According to their own confessions, which were made unblushingly, it would have required truly a person 'wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove,' to have guided and controlled dispositions and temperaments like theirs! Mrs. Marvel was not one of those gifted women who alone should attempt the care of such young hearts, for great indeed is the responsibility.

Mary's violent temper more than once broke forth in loud complaints and tears against her father's au-

thority. When he opposed her will she was sullen and impertinent. On these occasions she would fly from her room to seek the sympathy of Eva, who assured her that hers was a "proper spirit," and told her "that no girl of her years should bear such restraint." In return, Eva confided to Mary's willing ear, the many secrets of her aching heart, which she said was burthened nearly to breaking. She did not hesitate to say that the disappointments she had experienced in her marriage with Mr Ellory, were many, not the least of which was his unwillingness that she should seek pleasure out of his society. She also complained of his love for his mother and sister. "Think of the infatuation of Frank's mother," said Eva, "to suppose that he can continue to shower presents upon his sister Lucy."

"Why don't you spend so much money that he can't do it," suggested Mary.

"That is just what I am doing," replied Eva. "Did I show you the last dress I wore at Mrs. D.'s fancy ball? It is superb! Mad. Villitti charged me five hundred dollars for it. It is a silver tissue. That was very reasonable when you consider the point lace she put on it. Look at those pearl rosettes," said she, taking it from the wardrobe. "Are they not exquisite? I wish you could have seen Frank's face elongate when he saw the bill of it! 'why, my dear,' said he, 'that is more than my sister Lucy spends in a year.' I told him it was too late now to count the cost of a wife, and I cared little for his sister's ideas. Like a wise man, he put the bill in his pocket without another word. But I wish you could have seen him fold it. I verily believe he spent a quarter of an hour over it, turning it this way and that. In the evening, when I was attired for the ball, he said he could not admire

my dress, and that I looked much prettier in a simple morning wrapper! Fancy my unhappiness! I tell you I have married a Goth! Only that Count Von Wollonstadt made me blush with the compliments he paid me that evening, upon the exquisite taste I had shown, Frank's common ideas would have made me miserable. Oh! Mary, *you* don't know the misfortune of having been admired too much, and marrying a man of a common mind and tastes, who only appreciates economy and propriety."

"That is true," replied Mary.

While they were speaking, the lady in green spectacles of whom we have spoken before, put her head in the door and said, "Miss Staunton, two young ladies have been waiting in your parlor for you; I can't divine what you and Mrs. Ellory can find to talk about so long. I should think by this time you would have set half the world by the ears. My husband says he never saw two women together without knowing that a storm was brewing for somebody. Is this the dress I heard so much talk about? It is not so much, after all. I'd be the unhappiest woman living, if I thought so much of *my* dress as *you* do, Mrs. Ellory. I think too much of myself, I suppose, to lay much stress on my dress," and away she went, after this expression of her sentiments.

"I can't bear that woman," said Eva, "she makes me feel uncomfortable whenever she comes near me."

Mary found Sue Summers and Victoria Hans in her room, and gave them a cordial reception.

"Molly," said Sue, "we have come to spend the day with you; and we've been thinking if you will ask your father to send word to the Hall, we may get leave to stay till Monday. Saturday is a holiday, you know.

What a superb place this is! How do you feel here?" (throwing herself into an easy-chair in front of the window.) she inquired. "What do you do all day? Who have you seen? Do you sit in this window all the while? Look at that fright of a man over there! Did human eyes ever witness such a piece of conceit as that? Did you see him bow to me? How do you do, sir? (bowing in return and smiling complacently.) I wonder who the monkey thinks I am? What shall we do, girls? Where can we go? Let us have an adventure of some kind. Poor Vic. is fit for nothing but Elysian fields and consecrated groves, where sylvan streams meander, ever since she was introduced to a gentleman, who paid her the most desperate attentions. Mrs. Marvel took some of the most stylish of the first class girls to a reception about a month ago, and this gentleman was introduced to Mrs. Marvel and Vic. He told Vic. before they separated that evening, that his heart was taken captive at the first glance of her eye. You know Vic.'s quiet, coquettish way."

Susan spoke so rapidly that there was no opportunity for a reply until she paused to rest, and then Mary answered in the same rapid strain her several questions; at the same time assuring the girls she was overjoyed to see them, and they should have a glorious time. Mary inquired how her old favorite, Miss Knight, survived her absence; and asked, "Have they buried me yet at the Hall? If they have, no doubt my ghost now and then comes to frighten the little girls, or to haunt Mrs. Marvel." They both laughed at the idea, and Susan assured Mary that it seemed as if half the school had gone since she had left.

"We have had great times with our *private letter boxes* this week," said Susan. "Miss Waters found

our Post Office in a hollow tree in the garden, and the letters were carried to Mrs. Marvel's room, and *every one read!* There were some queer ones. One described Mrs. Marvel. Who "C" and "D" and "Pansy" and "Phœbus" were, she could not tell from Adam and Eve! Well, the bell was rung, and we were called together. Such a set of pale and red faces as we were; but not a soul would own to one of the notes. Miss Waters, and even Miss Knight, could not help smiling when Mrs. Marvel alluded to the one in which she was shown up. I never was so frightened in my life; for *I* wrote that letter. But the love letters beat every thing you ever heard. The plots and plans devised in them, Miss Knight said, would have done credit to the women of the times of the French Revolution; and if carried out would have been more direful than the gunpowder plot."

"Who has made this girl so stupid," interrupted Mary, twitching a bouquet of flowers from Victoria's hand unceremoniously, and flinging them back into her face to arouse her.

"Count Von—Von—Von—what is his name, Vic.?" said Sue. "Sure enough you may call her changed. She misses all her lessons, mixes up the flats and sharps and naturals and incidentals in her music; puzzles the teachers with stupid answers, and in the midst of all these troubles, in comes a long letter of advice from her father, and a postcript from her mother, enumerating the privations *they* are cheerfully enduring to give her the advantages of an education at Marvel Hall! I don't wonder the poor girl cries over those letters. But Vic. can't help it, if she can't study; for I suppose she is fairly in love with the Count."

"What do the girls say about me now?" asked

Mary; "nothing? what is going on in the club?" she continued.

[The club was an association at the Hall, which bound its members by rules and obligations to secrecy. "*Model Pupils*," not many! (those who obeyed school rules) were excluded. Characters and names were assumed to avoid detection. Epistolary correspondence was carried on between the members, which the most objectionable novel writer would blush to introduce into his works. A premium was once offered by the club to the girl who could frame the most blasphemous oath! and the prize was won!! *This is no fiction*. The heart grows sick and the hand trembles while penning the melancholy truth. But diabolical as this association was, there were those who, in the merciful Providence of God, came out unharmed from even so fiery a furnace, and who have looked back in horror upon the dangers that surrounded them. Others, alas! irretrievably lost, have gone down in shame and sorrow to their graves!]

The reply to the question "What is going on in the club?" could not be repeated here *****

"Count Von Wollonstadt," murmured Victoria, sentimentally, in reply to Mary's inquiry respecting the name of her lover.

"Count Von Wollonstadt," repeated Susan, mimicking Victoria's voice. "Well, Molly," Susan continued, "the Count was introduced and made desperate love to Victoria all the evening; danced and waltzed with her and promised to walk up Fifth Avenue every afternoon to meet our class. If Vic. would allow him to write to her, she was to cough and drop her handkerchief when he passed her. Vic. did so. May I arrange my hair here," (going into Mary's room, and

leaving the door ajar in order to continue the conversation.) "What heavenly pomade you have. This has a delicious flavor. Mrs. Marvel says the rank of a lady is known by the articles upon her toilet table. What a lady you have become in a hurry! Where in the world did you get the taste to think of all these nick-nacks? Well, as I was saying, Vic. coughed, and dropt her handkerchief. Miss Waters, the dear creature, was just behind her, telling one of the older girls a story of her own disappointment in love, and did not notice her. The next day such a letter came as you never read! Poor Vic. never closed her eyes all night after it. When Mrs. Marvel asked her from whom the letter came, she told her that it was a private letter from her mother! Her mother wrote a very loving letter I assure you. We teaze Vic. to death sending the little girls, a dozen times in the day, to ask her '*when she had heard from her mother!*'"

While Susan was talking, Victoria laid her bonnet upon the bed, arranged her hair, and then sank listlessly into an easy chair.

"Who is the Count like, Vic.?" inquired Mary.

"No one I ever saw before," replied Victoria, blushing. "He has a large moustache, and curling hair; light blue eyes; deep low voice, and a proud stern look; and a walk just like Forest in Hamlet."

"As I live, I believe the very man sits opposite to me at table," exclaimed Mary; clapping her hands and jumping from her chair, she danced around the room to express her delight.

"You *must* ask your father to write a note to the Hall, and let me meet him," said Victoria.

"Does he wear a *large* diamond ring?" inquired Mary.

"Yes, and a diamond pin, and a heavy gold chain," replied Victoria.

"The very same," said Mary. "I have seen him in Mrs. Ellory's room. He is very intimate with Mrs. Ellory. The ladies have tableau parties two or three times a week, in her private parlor. The Count was Romeo, and Mrs. Ellory was Juliet, last night, in a tableau. Her husband scowled terribly, when she stood gazing into Romeo's eyes most lovingly."

"Who is Mrs. Ellory?" asked Victoria, not admiring the tableau of her lover playing Romeo to any Juliet but herself.

"She is Judge Atwood's daughter of South Carolina. After her parents' death—they both died when she was very young—her guardian brought her north, and placed her at Marvel Hall. I was only nine or ten years old when she left the school, but I remember her very well, for she was kinder to me than any other girl at Marvel Hall, and used to come to the dark room when I was in punishment, which was often enough, as you know, and give me candies, and tell me not to cry so hard or I would get sick. After she left the Hall, I never saw another girl I liked so well, until Isabella Sinclair came. Father blames me for my intimacy with Mrs. Ellory now. He says she is a vain, light-minded woman, whose example is bad; but I tell him there is no chance of my ever following her example, for no one will ever flatter me! Dear me, girls! how I would like to be admired like Mrs. Ellory. She is the greatest beauty you ever saw, Vic. Wouldn't *you* be vain if every one told you that you were angelic? I have heard gentlemen, and married gentlemen too, flatter her and ask her to give them her likeness."

"Did she do it?" inquired Victoria.

"Of course she did. I could not tell you all the admirers she has had, and I may say, has yet. There was no end to the offers she received after she left the Hall, she tells me. She has a pile of love letters that high, (Mary raised her hand two feet from the table,) I have read a great many of them. Some of the gentlemen who wrote to her are married now, and I told her the other day if their wives heard of it they would make a time of it! She spent two summers at Saratoga, and two at Newport, where she created the greatest sensation. She fell in love with a celebrated opera singer at Newport, and came near eloping with him. Her guardian prevented it in time. I don't blame her for that, for she tells me all the girls she knew there, were as crazy as she was about him, '*he was so pretty and sweet,*' they said. At the south there were three duels fought for her, and she was engaged a half dozen times. Finally, after breaking hearts by the dozen, she picked up the quietest kind of a specimen of humanity, as she calls Mr. Ellory. I do like her, and will never forget how hard she tried to make the girls believe that I was not so bad a child as they all thought me."

While they were talking, Susan Summers went to Mary's room, and was examining the furniture, the dresses which hung in the rosewood wardrobe, and the contents of a writing desk, upon which she noticed several sealed letters; among them was one addressed to herself!

Scarcely had she broken the seal, when her sobs brought Mary and Victoria to her side. It was several minutes before she could tell them that Willie Sutherland, her lover, had left the city never to return. "He

has not received any answer to one of his letters to me in three months; and see what he writes: 'I will try to forget the false-hearted girl for whom I would once have sacrificed my life; but, alas! now I plunge into the sea of despair, where I will be, ere this meets your deceitful eyes, the food of fishes!'"

"Don't cry, Sue," said Mary. "I am very, very sorry. It was I who did all the mischief. Do you remember when you made me angry in the attic? I never put a letter in the post-office for you after that, and I tore up every one he wrote to you since, except this one. Don't be angry, for indeed, indeed, I am very sorry. What can I do? I know it was very wrong. There now, don't cry. *I* know now what we can do. I'll get the clerk here to write a note in father's name to Mrs. Marvel, and ask leave for you to stay all night, that will give us time; and we will consult Mrs. Ellory what to do next. She can tell us, I'm sure. I never saw any one get out of difficult places as she can. The bell was rung, and a messenger sent to request the clerk to come to Miss Staunton's room. He came most willingly. After a good deal of familiar chat with the girls, he sat down at a little table in the centre of the room. The young girls stood around him giving so many contradictory directions, that he found it difficult to form a plausible reason for requesting that they might remain at the hotel. One suggested an invitation to a historical or chemical lecture; and another a visit to the panorama of the Holy Land. The latter hint was accepted. The possibility of being surprised by the entrance of Mr. Staunton somewhat impeded the ready flow of the young clerk's pen; but the note was finished without any interruption, and the messenger was desired "to run every

step of the way, and be sure and bring back a favorable answer."

The answer came. Permission was granted. "Mr. Staunton," Mrs. Marvel said, "could not be refused." After reading the reply, which was written in Miss Waters' hand, the girls knocked at Mrs. Ellory's door. A feeble voice answered: "Come in." They opened the door, and found the lady in tears. Mary introduced Sue and Victoria. Mrs. Ellory had been relating her grievances to the Count, who had come in to make his usual daily visit to Mrs. Ellory in her husband's absence, and had left a moment before the girls entered. She had told him how much her husband disapproved of her acting in tableau with him; and assured him she was made wretched beyond endurance by this jealousy. Every chair in the room was piled with articles of clothing of various kinds. Trinkets, jewelry, flowers, head-dresses, scarfs, and fans lay in confusion upon the tables. Juliet's robes, worn in the tableau of the previous night, were thrown across one end of the sofa; and Mr. Ellory's dressing robe occupied the other upon which a pet lap-dog had curled to take a nap.

"I am the most unhappy of women," sighed the "unappreciated wife," glancing at the mirror opposite to her. She fastened back a ringlet that had escaped from the pearl comb; then covered here face with her hands, and declared she "was weary of life, for her jealous husband did nothing but complain of her, whenever they were together. If I am out late at the opera, or at a ball, or at private theatricals, I am sure to find him up, waiting for me; and when I come in, he takes out his watch and looks reproachfully. He expects me to be up like my maid in the morning to see him before he goes to business, and complains continually when

he comes home of the state of our room! Oh! girls, let me entreat you, never marry a *quiet man*, he will wonder what pleasure you can find in company—nor a *poor man*, he'll kill you with hints on economy—nor a *handsome* man, he'll bore you with the compliments paid him—nor a *learned man*, he'll sneer at your simplicity—nor a *minister*, for you marry the congregation—nor a *doctor*, for he'll always talk of other ladies—never marry a man who has a mother and sister to support, as you value the comforts of life." Fip the lap-dog at this moment sprang from the sofa and jumped upon Mrs. Ellory's lap. She petted and caressed him; called him her darling and solace, and then continued her lamentations and advice to the girls, who had seated themselves close by her side. Mary introduced the subject of *their* anxieties, as soon as Mrs. Ellory paused to weep and wipe Fip's eyes, and a detailed account of Susan's and William's love, which, till now, had run smoothly. Mary confessed her unfortunate interference, and told Mrs. Ellory "she must help her out of the difficulty." Mrs. Ellory was thoughtful a moment, then replied, "Go to the Fortune-teller and clairvoyant in —— street. She has given me hints, that saved me from many a dilemma. She can tell you," looking at Susan, "if Mr. Sutherland is the one you are to marry. You know it is all destiny. Would you believe it; she tells me I am to be married *three* times!" The good lady shook her head mournfully, and wiped her eyes. Fip looked in her face and ungratefully wagged his tail!

"My second husband will be a wealthy bachelor, who will *adore* me," she exclaimed, clasping her hands and raising her eyes in a theatrical ecstasy, "and my *third*," she continued, "my third will be a crippled old miser."

"Mr. Ellory will die suddenly, I suppose," said Mary, laughing, "for he seems in good health now; and I've heard you say he has an iron constitution! I wonder who the rich bachelor will be? Don't you believe he is the Count? Victoria says, Count Von Wollonstadt is *her* admirer."

The conversation was interrupted by a servant who handed Mrs. Ellory a bouquet, to which a note was attached by a blue ribbon. The note required an immediate answer. She asked the girls to excuse her until she replied to it. She advised them to go to —— street at once, before it would be too late in the day. When they had closed the door, Mrs. Ellory read the letter again. Her hand trembled, and her eyes seemed fixed upon its contents. With a flushed cheek and beating heart, she replied to the note. When it was folded and directed she laid her hand upon the bell, and then withdrew it, as if undetermined in her resolution to call the servant to deliver the reply. Before she could decide her husband entered, and a false excuse was given for the embarrassment, which did not satisfy his mind.

CHAPTER X.

"BLESSINGS on Mrs. Marvel's head," said Victoria, "she must have been in a good humor when our note reached her. Now let us be off as soon as possible."

"I must invent an excuse, and leave it with the servant for my father," said Mary; "what shall it be? he does not wish me to go out without him."

"Tell him you were sick and needed the walk," said Victoria. It was done. The girls crossed Broadway, and entered Duane street. They were soon out of sight of civilization. A new set of beings seemed suddenly to appear before them when they had reached the narrow street which Mrs. Ellory told them led to the abode of the fortune-teller. "I am afraid of my life," said Susan; "I dare not venture in this alley. If you choose to run the risk of being buried alive or murdered, *I* do not. I will wait here in the street till you come out."

At this moment a dirty-looking butcher-boy passed, and offered his arm to Victoria. She shrunk back alarmed at the insult. His loud coarse laugh attracted the attention of a crowd who were standing around the doorway of a porter house. A group of ragged, uncombed, weak-eyed boys and girls surrounded the young ladies, and inquired if they were looking for any one? A mulatto woman, whose tattered garments exposed

her emaciated form, reeled out of a beer saloon, and fell against Mary—muttering, "Take the quality out of h——l! hum, augh!" Pale looking women with sick babies in their arms came to the windows, and "wondered what brought fine ladies like these here?" "Sure, don't you know they are no better than they ought to be," said an old crone, bent with age, who raised her stick over the children's heads and threatened to break every skull of them if they did not move back and let the ladies have a chance to get into the alley.

"We will never come out alive if we go in," whispered Victoria, trembling with fear. Mary was not afraid, and Sue's anxiety to hear from her lover, made her willing to overcome every obstacle.

The children made a way open to the long dark passage. From the other end of it could be seen a little misty, smoky, dirty looking daylight. The girls hesitated a moment, looked inquiringly to one another, and then pressing closely together side by side, entered the dirty passage, whose foul atmosphere almost stifled them.

The entrance was instantly blocked up by the little urchins who had followed them. They set up cries and screams, and hurled at the "fine uns" volleys of obscene threats and jeers. Scarcely had the young ladies reached half way before their progress was impeded by a tipsy sailor, who caught Susan in his arms, and held to her as he would have done to the mast. The terrified girl almost fainted, but making a desperate effort she flung him on the ground.

"What will we do," said Victoria, no longer able to restrain her tears. With a timid step, Mary approached an aged woman, who was leading a blind child by the hand.

"I've no change in my purse, good woman," said Mary, "to give you, but will you not show us the way to the fortune-teller and clairvoyant, who, they say, lives here?"

"I'll do it, sweet creature, for the love of God; if you haven't the money, may the Lord soon send you plenty. Come this way, honey, the people here are very wicked, and will try to lead you astray, don't speak to one of them. Come here," beckoning to Mary and Sue, who had stopped to satisfy a new applicant for charity. A low-sized sallow woman, with a large head, around which was wound a red and yellow handkerchief, appeared at the top of a rickety flight of stairs, that led, on the outside of the building, to the fourth story.

"There she is, go up to her, and luck go with you, poor innocents," said the woman, who had conducted them so far. The young girls kept close to the side of the house, and ascended the creaking stairs. The banister swung to and fro when touched, and so far from offering any support, only made their heads dizzy with its motion. The old gypsy who met them grinned when they had reached the top with an attempt at pleasantry, showing two long stumps in her mouth, the only remaining teeth of which she could boast. She opened the door of her room and motioned them to enter. One looked at the other to proceed, but not even Mary had the courage to do so, so dark and diabolical was the aspect within. The walls were hung in black drapery, upon which were painted the moon and stars.

"*This* is the young lady who wishes her fortune told," said Mary, endeavoring to thrust Susan forward.

"Oh! you are mistaken," replied Sue, by this time

scarcely conscious of what she was saying. The old hag muttered some encouraging words, and induced them to cross the threshold. No sooner had they done so, than the door was locked, and the curtain of the window dropped! Mary's large eyes were opened wide and fixed upon the gypsy, in terror, watching her every movement. Poor Sue grew still paler than before, and trembled violently, and Victoria held tightly to Mary's dress, and shook her head in prophetic dread.

"It won't do now to let her see that you are afraid of her, Sue," whispered Mary. The dame took a pack of cards from her pocket, and in a glance at them she told the girls she saw their fortunes clearly. A full red curtain hung in front of a doorway. She parted it and showed them a small dark chamber within, which was lighted by a lamp that burned dimly. A table stood in the middle of the room covered with a dirty cloth, and upon it lay a glass through which the gypsies looked to read the future. They heard a rumbling sound like distant thunder, and after it had ceased in a solemn tone "All is ready; who will lift the veil of destiny?" was asked by a voice within, unheard till now. Susan stared vacantly into the enchanted chamber.

"I know she can tell you, if you will marry Willie," said Mary.

"Your lover is waiting for you," said the hag. "Will you see him?"

Sue followed the fortune-teller without seeming to know what she was doing, and took her place at the table as directed. The curtain was again dropped. Not a sound could be heard from within, but loud knocks on every side upon the walls of the room in which Mary and Victoria remained were heard, which almost paralyzed them with fear. Grievously, but too

late, did they repent of their folly. After an absence of more than half an hour Sue appeared weeping, and was warned not to tell to mortal what had been revealed to her.

"You can come now," said the old woman, laying her long fingers on Mary's shoulder. "I like your wild black eyes."

Mary shook her head, and in a hoarse voice inquired "how much she must pay for Susan's fortune."

"Ten dollars," replied the woman, grabbing a bill from the open pocket-book, and hobbling off with it to the other side of the room; giving a stifled chuckle when she thrust it into her pocket.

"Will you go with us to the street?" asked Mary, "we are afraid to pass through the yard again."

"If you will give me this scarf," she replied, taking it from Mary's neck and thrusting it into her own bosom. The old woman then tied a tri-colored handkerchief over her head, and conducted the girls to the entrance of the alley-way; snatching off Victoria's collar she gave her some pennies in return, which she told her to scatter to the children while passing them. Victoria did so, and they fell upon and caught them up with the greediness of hungry wolves.

Once again in sight of Broadway the poor deluded girls breathed more freely. Thankful indeed might they be, that they had been preserved from the vile dangers of that dreadful den. They hurried on without speaking until they had reached the great thoroughfare, and saw crowds pass to and fro. Mary tried to extort from Susan the secret she had heard. Fearfully confident that the good and evil predicted would surely come to her, an agonizing dread filled her mind. Naturally sensitive, and of delicate constitution, the excite-

ment of the last three hours had rendered her almost incapable of thought or action. Confused thoughts oppressed her over-taxed brain; she looked wildly, first at Mary, and then at Victoria, clinging to them as if afraid of being spirited away. She made no reply to their questions, though endeavoring to speak; she was pale, and became every moment less able to support herself, while her pulse seemed scarcely to beat.

"Let us call to that man by the carriage across the street," said Mary. "I am afraid she will fall, she leans so heavily upon me. I cannot support her long. Oh! Victoria! what will I do with her? She is fainting."

"Sue, Sue," said Victoria, "what is the matter? Do you wish to go to the Hall?"

Susan bowed her head, and the girls, assisted by the driver, helped her into the carriage, which was close by, and drove slowly to Marvel Hall. When she reached the door, Mrs. Marvel was told that they went out to walk, and that Susan was taken ill, and that they had thought it better not to return to the hotel with her. That night Sue told strange things in her ravings and startled Miss Waters, who sat alone with her in the little room at the end of the hall. Victoria returned with Mary to the hotel.

They hastened back, fearful that Mr. Staunton would come home and be alarmed by their absence. Falsehoods of every hue had to be told to conceal their adventures. These deviations from the truth cost Mary but little trouble of mind, for, as she had confessed to Isabella, she could now tell a lie unblushingly.

When Mr. Staunton entered his parlor he gave Victoria a heartfelt welcome; and told Mary that he hoped she would exert herself and make the time pass pleasantly to her young friend during her visit. He

glanced over the places of amusement advertised, but remarked that he saw none for that evening to which he could take a school girl. "The plays to-night at the theatre are not good," he added. "They are objectionable ones translated from the French. No young girl should see or read them."

"Any girl who has been at Marvel Hall," whispered Victoria, "cannot be injured by a *French play*, or one of Sue's novels. Your good father thinks us very innocent!" *

Mary asked her father to go with them to the public parlor, where there would be a hop that night, she said, and Victoria and she must go down and look on. They could not dance, for Victoria was not prepared to do so; but it would be real pleasure to sit aside and talk about the dresses and the attentions of the gentlemen. Mr. Staunton had not been present at one of these balls, and saw no objection to allowing his daughter and her school friend the gratification they so much desired.

Scarcely were they seated in the parlor before Count Von Wollonstadt entered with Mrs. Ellory leaning upon his arm. They sat down together in the recess of the window, and seemed totally forgetful for a time of the presence of any other persons except themselves. Mrs. Ellory looked sad and thoughtful while she listened to his conversation, which was earnest and animated. He leaned familiarly over her, resting his arm upon the back of the couch upon which she sat. At length he paused for a reply. She hesitated, shook her head, and hid her face behind her fan. A very youthful gentleman approached her at this moment,

* A remark made to the writer by a young lady educated at a fashionable school in New York.

bowed before her obsequiously, and in a moment more she was clasped in his arms and whirling rapidly in the waltz. Every one in the room was attracted by the grace of her movements, and many acknowledged the power of her beauty.

Count Von Wollonstadt looked disappointed and sullen, until he caught Victoria's gaze, which had been fixed upon him since he entered the room.

He took his seat by her side; Victoria introduced Mary, and she advised him to take care, or Mrs. Ellory would become jealous of his attentions to her handsome friend. "Never fear," replied the Count, endeavoring to speak in a tone of indifference, "I am Mrs. Ellory's disinterested friend. My advice and influence over the young creature is of vast importance to her happiness. She is not happy, and but for my friendship her heart would suffer. That husband of hers cannot understand her nature, and I am trying to teach her to become indifferent to his unkindness. She will never be happy so long as she loves him. His jealous disposition makes her no more than a slave. I am only a friend, I assure you, Miss Hans. I live but for one—one image alone is reflected upon my heart; there it must dwell while I have life. Doubt me not."

The conversation was interrupted by Mr. Staunton's approach. Mary introduced the Count to her father. Von Wollonstadt read in Mr. Staunton's glance his opinion of him, and took care to address his conversation to him while he scarcely noticed the young ladies by his side.

As soon as Mrs. Ellory had finished the waltz, a gentleman with an eye-glass, and a rose-bud in his button-hole, advanced towards her, and "begged the felicity—" and so it continued until the young wife be-

became exhausted and sank into a large arm-chair. Count Von Wollonstadt stood by her side and fanned her until her husband came into the parlor. Mrs. Saunders walked over to the other side of the room and told him "it was a pity he had stayed away so late, for she could tell him there were some young ladies in the room who were pouting in the corner because his *wife* drew their beaux away from them."

Mr. Ellory looked inquiringly at his wife, whose look of scorn satisfied him that the gossip was not worthy of notice, and he made no reply.

He whispered to Eva and told her she could remain as long as she pleased in the parlor, but she must excuse him, for he was very much fatigued, and had yet to look over the papers before he retired. "You know, Eva," he added, "parties and balls are a bore to me at all times; I cannot endure them; but if you like them you must go without me. I cannot attend to pleasure and business. One or the other must be given up."

"Dance a quadrille with me before you go, Frank," said his wife, looking lovingly into his face, "but one quadrille, Frank, just to satisfy that disagreeable old woman in green spectacles."

"I cannot, Eva. It is unkind to ask me. I am tired to death, and harassed out of my life. I am in no spirits to dance. It is very well for you who have nothing to do all day, but I—". The Count at this moment bowed before Eva, saying: "A couple is wanted to make up the quadrille; may I have the honor if not already engaged?" he added, looking at Mr. Ellory. Mr. Ellory shook his hand, and Eva, half to vex her husband, smiled, and accepted the arm of the Count, and took her place in the quadrille. Mr. Ellory left the parlor. He went to his room, and sat

down by the centre-table, over which a pleasant gas-light was burning. The daily papers and some new books lay before him, and he could not help congratulating himself upon the happy escape he had made from the ball-room. It was past midnight before his wife left the gay scene, of which she was the acknowledged belle. The flattering compliments paid to her beauty and charming conversation did not satisfy her heart; she sighed deeply, and tore from her finger a magnificent diamond ring, which she had been persuaded to receive from the Count that evening after her husband left her.

The following morning a letter was handed to Victoria. Breaking the seal she recognized the hand of the Count, who had filled three pages of perfumed paper with regrets for the disappointment he had endured the previous evening in not being able to speak to her alone, and begged an interview to explain why he had avoided her.

"How can it be accomplished, Mary?" inquired Victoria, when they were left alone.

"I don't know," replied Mary. "I am afraid of undertaking it. I feel guilty whenever I think of poor Sue. Who knows what will become of her? Suppose that she should die. It was all my work going to that old woman, who has frightened her so much; I could not sleep last night. I dreamed the old thing had me by the throat, and I thought she coiled a serpent round my neck. If father should find out all the lies I told him yesterday, I do not know what he would think of me. I am afraid every time he comes in, or looks gravely, that the secret of my deception is coming to light. He is the only one I fear and love. What is the reason, Victoria, I am forever just doing what I am

ashamed to tell the truth about? I wish I could make a clean breast and begin anew."

"What! begin anew telling lies!" said Victoria.

"I suppose that is the very thing I'd do," replied Mary, laughing so loud and long, that Victoria became alarmed.

"Yes, begin again," repeated Mary, still laughing. "Oh! dear, is it not dreadful how we can deceive." Mary's loud laugh caused a rap on the wall from the occupant of the adjoining room.

"That is the lady in green spectacles," said Mary, not regarding the admonition.

A few moments more and the lady in green glasses put her head in the door, (she seldom entered a room,) and asked them if they were heathen, and forgot that it was Sunday morning. What ails you? Have you been taking intoxicating liquor that has excited your spirits to such a blasphemous extent?" said she, looking at Mary.

Receiving no reply from the young girls, she closed the door harshly, highly indignant, and muttered "she was not surprised that tempests by sea and by land, that volcanoes, and earthquakes, and plague, pestilence, and famine, now were poured out upon the earth; for the iniquity of the people was great in these latter days."

Passing Mrs. Ellory's parlor, Mrs. Saunders heard louder voices than usual, and paused to listen. The door of the room was not entirely closed: she seated herself in a chair in the hall and opened the book in her hand from which she read the following words: "If our Lord builds not the house, they have labored in vain that build it."—126th Ps.

"True," thought Mrs. Saunders, wiping her glasses, "true, hear that poor deluded man trying to make that

giddy creature contented. Our Lord did not build this house. So they are going to housekeeping, are they? Well, it is high time." She drew nearer, having lost the last remark made by Mr. Ellory. His tone changed. "His feelings are hurt," thought Mrs. Saunders. The following conversation came to her ear, which she turned to account as soon as she had an opportunity.

"Frank, you must allow *me* to be mistress and sole mistress of my house, if we must go to housekeeping next month as you say."

"Certainly, my dear, you shall direct your household as you please; which I am sure will be a credit to you."

"I can't promise you *that*. I don't intend to make myself a slave to any one's whims. I was not educated for a *housekeeper!* You must remember all pa paid for my accomplishments at Marvel Hall. I hope you do not intend to ask your mother and Lucy to live with us. If you do, they will find the house too small for us all before the year is out, or I am mistaken."

"No room in my house for my mother, Eva? Oh! Heaven forbid it. You do not know, Eva, what a mother she has been, or you could not say it. You do not mean it. Surely you do not, my love?"

"I *do* mean every word of it, and you must tell your mother and Lucy at once that I won't consent."

Frank rested his head upon the table before them. The years of unwearied sacrifice for his good which she had endured, the patient love that mother had borne him, rose to his mind and filled his heart; and *she* had been *rejected* and refused a home beneath his roof by her whom he had loved more than that mother.

"Eva!" he exclaimed, "you are not heartless. You will not persist in this, I am sure. Say you will not. Do not make me act a part so ungrateful, so un-

natural. I will give my mother and sister their choice. They must come to us or allow me to provide a home for them. If they come you will be kind to my mother, Eva."

"Indeed I'll do no such thing! *You* provide them a home! Only yesterday you refused me a set of jewelry which I ordered, and now you talk of *a home* for your mother and Lucy. I see how it is. A sham all prepared when I want money. I really thought you had been unfortunate in business, you were so shocked at my last quarter's shopping; but now I don't believe it, and shall order the diamonds sent home. No, no, depend upon it I did not marry your mother and Lucy when I married you, Frank; I had not *quite* lost my senses."

Frank's heart was too full to reply. He left the room, hoping that after a little reflection, Eva would be convinced how much she could add to her own happiness by acting from principle, rather than selfish impulse. Vain hope! She had never been taught either by precept or example, a higher motive than her own personal gratification. Returning in a short time to his parlor, Mr. Ellory found Count Von Wollonstadt seated by Eva's side talking in a low and confidential tone to her, while she was tearing in pieces a note she held in her hand, apparently unconscious of what she was doing. She raised her eyes an instant when Frank entered, and then continued the conversation with the Count, who strove to hide by apparent indifference the embarrassment he felt in her husband's presence.

"My dear Mrs. Ellory, these are but little storms in the matrimonial sky, that will clear and purify the atmosphere," said the Count aloud, giving Mr. Ellory to understand that he was a peacemaker between them.

Mr. Ellory had been so much occupied by the sorrow of his heart, that he passed Mrs. Saunders when he left his room without noticing her; but the Count had seen her sitting in the hall, and warned Mrs. Ellory against leaving her door open. According to his suggestion it was closed, and the lady who was debarred from further insight into her neighbors affairs, hastened to the rooms of the most gossiping of her friends, where she narrated with notes, comments, innuendoes, and expressive exclamations, all she had seen and all she imagined; and assured them that after the quarrelling, and the Count's visits, they might soon look for a "flare up," in that quarter.

"That comes," she continued, "from men marrying girls for their beauty, (certainly Mr. Saunders did not do so, thought the pretty little Mrs. Petite, to whom she was speaking,) and leaving them all day at home alone with nothing to do; no, not alone, for they always find company! Those husbands toil and labor to gratify the vanity of these dolls, till their souls and bodies are dry and withered as mummies. Too fatigued to join in the pleasures of an evening, they beg some friend to accompany their dear Lilly to the ball or play; while they remain at home to rest their weary heads, which have been crammed all day full of stocks and merchandise of all imaginable kinds. Not a thought given to their poor dying souls from morning till night; and not one drop of comfort to their poor parched hearts is vouchsafed to them. Do you wonder that catastrophe after catastrophe, calamity after calamity, and scandal after scandal occurs in married life among such people? What would become of Mr. Saunders, I wonder, if I led him such a life? I verily believe with his melancholy turn of mind he wouldn't wait a week to throw himself off the dock."

CHAPTER XI.

The evening of that day, Everett Root called and remarked to Mary that "Miss Summers was very ill from too great mental excitement caused by having been alarmed. She visited a clairvoyant, and the creature predicted an untimely death. My father fears from Dr. Blossom's account, in consultation, that the insanity with which she is threatened will be permanent."

Mr. Staunton, who was present, did not hear the remark. Victoria was conversing with him at the time, and was giving a narrative of an amusing occurrence that had led to her coming to the city to school.

Mary placed her finger upon her lip, and drew her chair near to Everett. Glancing occasionally at her father, she said in a suppressed and agitated tone: "Insanity? Is she insane? Who said she had been to a clairvoyant?"

"She told it herself," replied Everett.

"With whom? and for what?" asked Mary.

"With you and Miss Hans," she said, "to find out about some letters of hers which you had read and intercepted."

"Did you not say she is insane?" asked Mary, scarcely able to articulate.

"Yes."

"Do they believe her ravings at the Hall?"

"I believe they do," replied Everett.

"*You* do not believe it, do you?" said Mary, in a supplicating tone.

"I will not, if you say it is not true."

"I do say it," said Mary. "Poor Sue," she continued, "how could she have imagined such things?"

"It may be only a temporary derangement," said Everett.

"Don't speak of it now; don't say a word more or father will hear you. Mrs. Marvel hates me and she will tell him that all Susan says is true; and all I could say would not be believed. If I could prove I was here all day and not out at all, she could make any one believe I told an untruth. Don't you believe it; don't you let any one believe it; will you? I'll depend upon you as a friend. You know what a life I led at Marvel Hall. I told you the other day, and you must not believe any thing you hear from there. I'm so afraid that father will hear of it. What will I do?"

"Tell the truth fearlessly," replied Everett. "It will bear the strongest test. All will come out right in the end. Be fearless."

Everett's sympathy was excited by Mary's earnest appeal to him to defend her. He saw the disadvantages under which she labored; and if trouble came on account of the ravings of the sick girl, he resolved to protect her if accused.

Mary wished for an opportunity as soon as possible to warn Victoria not to speak before Everett of their having gone to —— street. "Can you not go over to my father and keep him in conversation?" said Mary. "I am anxious to tell Victoria how ill poor Sue is."

Everett joined Mr. Staunton and Victoria, and en-

tered into an animated conversation; Mary went to her room to bathe her aching head.

Remaining some time, Victoria left the parlor to inquire the cause.

In a few words Mary told her friend of Sue's illness, and of her danger, and begged her to deny any knowledge of what Sue talked of in her delirium. Victoria consented, and returned to the parlor to excuse Mary to Mr. Staunton, saying she had retired on account of a headache.

Everett left early that evening. All the way home he dwelt upon the injustice with which the poor girl had been treated by Mrs. Marvel. That Mary could be guilty of any thing so contemptible as intercepting letters, or of deceit and falsehood, he could not believe. "She has asked me to defend her and I shall do so, cost what it may," were his last thoughts, when sleep closed his eyes to dream that he was a knight of the olden time.

As soon as Victoria left her, Mary hastened to Mrs. Ellory's room, to warn her of the danger of speaking of the visit to —— street. She found Mr. Ellory alone, half asleep over his books. Mrs. Ellory had gone out to pass the evening with a friend. "When she returned," Mr. Ellory said, "he would ask her to go to Mary's room and see her before she retired."

"Do, if you please, Mr. Ellory," said Mary. "It is very important that I should speak to her."

Mary went to bed at a late hour and put out the light in her room. Victoria, less burdened than she was, soon fell asleep; but Mary turned from side to side in vain endeavoring to find repose. Bright as the noon daylight burned the torch of conscience in that dark night, and illumined the hidden corners of her

young but sinful heart. Though at times it may have seemed wasted to the socket's edge, it yet flickered on unextinguished. Mary saw with fearful truthfulness the sad consequences of the falsehood and deceit of which she was guilty, but knew no way of escape from the danger.

Long past midnight a gentle knock at her door startled her from the dreamy state into which she had fallen. She had not slept, but had become bewildered by the dark forebodings with which her mind was disturbed. She sprang from the bed, trembling with a nervous fear. Mrs. Ellory stood before her when she opened the door, and said in a whisper: "If you have nothing of importance to tell me, you must not detain me long, for my disagreeable husband has already complained because I have not come home before. Oh Mary, I am wretched. If I could tell you all I suffer, you would pity me."

Mary related what had passed between her and Everett; and implored her to say to him that she was at home that day; for she could not bear to lose his good opinion.

"You are foolish to deny it," said Mrs. E., "it will entangle you in a net of trouble from which it will be difficult to extricate yourself. Why not tell that you *did* go? You need not say any thing about the letters."

"I'll have to say you advised me to do so," replied Mary, "if I say I went to —— street."

"Oh! no! that would never do," replied Mrs. Ellory emphatically. "My husband has forbidden me to consult such people, and does not know that I ever went there. That would never do. Deny it, of course. No one knows of it but Victoria and you and I. Deny it most certainly."

A loud knock on the wall near Mary's bed made them both start from the door against which they were leaning.

"Heavens!" said Mrs. Ellory, "what was that?" another knock.

"It comes from the door there, that leads to Mrs. Saunders' room," said Mary.

"Are you sure it was not a voice from the other world?" said Mrs. Ellory alarmed.

An angry voice from the key-hole satisfied them that it was not a spirit of air.

"Will you stop your talking there, girls? It is past midnight. I can't sleep," screamed the lady, who had so filled her head with the gossip of the day that she found it difficult to close her eyes.

Mrs. Ellory said "good night," and glided stealthily away, but was discovered by Mrs. Saunders, who put out her hand as she passed her door and caught her.

"You improper—imprudent—giddy—weak—indiscreet woman! what an hour this is to be caught walking about a hotel!" said Mrs. Saunders, in a horror-stricken tone of expostulation, holding Mrs. Ellory by her night-dress.

The next day she went from room to room, and in a hypocritical cant, pretended to feel very sorry for the weak woman, and said she "would only mention the fact, and would leave the ladies to draw their own conclusions."

Mr. Staunton was now occupied in arranging his business in order to depart for Europe, and had time to pay but little attention to his daughter during the day. He had remarked, he thought, a graver expression of late; but this might be attributed to the new

life into which she had been introduced. He hoped she felt the importance of more steadiness of action. He had large sums of money to invest to the best advantage before leaving New York, and an old friend of his youth had induced him to embark in an enterprise, which that friend assured him would double his investment in less than five years.

Everett called every evening during the week, and consoled Mary with the good news of Susan's gradual improvement, concealing from her, however, the gossiping reports in circulation respecting the cause of the poor girl's sickness.

Mrs. Ellory frequently invited Mary to go with her to make purchases for her new house, and sometimes induced her to assume the payment of her bills, which were made out in Mary's name, to conceal from her husband that she had indulged in so many extravagant superfluities beyond his means. Some of these she allowed Mary to pay for, promising to refund the money before she would be obliged to account to her father, to whom she must now make misrepresentations in order to procure the sums required.

Such favors were returned by Mrs Ellory's *confidence* and *friendship*.

One day, after the most daring of these manœuvres, Mary and Mrs. Ellory returned to the hotel at a late hour, exhausted by their day's shopping, and exulting in the idea of the skill with which they were able to manage the "dear man, who deserved to be deceived," (so said his wife,) "if he could deny her the necessaries of life."

When Mrs. Ellory entered her own room she found her husband very ill. He had come home earlier than usual, and had thrown himself upon the sofa

regardless of the laces and silks that lay in piles upon it. John, his servant man, was bathing his temples, and was begging to be allowed to go for a physician.

"No, thank you, John," said Mr. Ellory, "I feel better now. Leave me alone awhile with Mrs. Ellory."

"My *dear, dear* Frank!" exclaimed his wife, throwing herself upon his neck, "here is your own Eva; what is the matter? How long have you been ill? Do not allow any one to nurse you but your own Eva. She forgives you from her heart. Not a thought of wrong remains. In the face of Heaven there does not, Frank. I do indeed forgive you the pain you have caused me." Holding her clasped hands above her head, she remained an instant in this theatrical attitude and fell upon her knees before him.

Frank asked her to rise, and covering his face with his hands he burst into tears.

"What can this mean?" said Eva, trembling lest some one of her hundred little "harmless *innocent* flirtations" had been discovered.

Frank drew from his pocket a letter and handed it to her. It stated that she was faithless and unworthy of his love, and had been seen gliding through the house in her night-dress, past midnight, and the writer warned Mr. Ellory to watch her well. She grew pale while reading these charges, and her lips were compressed with anger. Throwing the note indignantly upon the floor, and trampling upon it in a tone of violent rage, she demanded if he had for a moment believed the false slanders against her contained in that anonymous letter.

"I confess, Eva," said Frank, "that I fear you have given reason for suspicion. Have I not warned you of this?"

"We part, forever part," said Eva; "never again will I hear such words from *your* lips, Frank. You have dared to doubt me. I am innocent, but adieu! forever, adieu!" and she turned quickly from him.

"Eva! Eva!" said Frank imploringly, and rising from the sofa he endeavored to hold her; but she fled from his grasp and closed the door.

In his haste to follow her, his foot slipped and he fell, striking heavily against the marble pier table.

"Eva," he murmured, when partially restored the next morning from the state of insensibility into which he was thrown by the fall. "Eva—where is she?" he inquired of those around him; but no one answered. How long he had remained insensible was not known. A servant had entered the room to deliver a message, and found him apparently lifeless on the floor. The house was at once in commotion; search was made for Mrs. Ellory, who could not be found, and the gossips of the hotel put their heads together to weave a story for the world's ear.

The following day the remarkable circumstances were mentioned in the papers. Newsboys ran from street to street, announcing "*an elopement in high life,*" thrusting their papers into the most unwilling hands. Before the week was ended, the cause of Mr. Ellory's deep and heartfelt grief was placarded upon every fence and post about the city.

Count Von Wollonstadt was not seen at —— hotel again; and none doubted for whom the unfortunate wife had lost all hope of peace. Mrs. Saunders said "He had lured her on step by step until she reached the precipice; where no doubt her head grew dizzy and she fell into the dreadful abyss below."

"I am not surprised at the result," said one.

"When a *married woman* takes pleasure in compliments from gentlemen, she has taken the first step to ruin; and when she *seeks* them, the second."

"It was her husband's fault," said Mr. Saunders. "Why did he allow a pretty young wife to live in a hotel, and form the acquaintance and intimacy of unprincipled adventurers like that scoundrel for whom a prison is too good a home."

"I suppose, Mr. Saunders," replied his wife, tartly, "you mean to insinuate that only *pretty ladies* like Mrs. Ellory are in danger. I can tell you, sir, I have seen plainer women than myself vain enough to be flattered by gentlemen, and mightily too."

Mrs. Saunders then accused her husband of dancing attendance on all the pretty girls in the hotel, and leaving her to take care of herself, which he coolly assured her she was able to do without aid.

A little quarrel ensued, which we will not enter into. It has been painful to dwell so long with a class of persons who are wasting and misapplying the talents given them, and trifling with the precious moments of life. Yet such is the frailty and blindness of many. How far happier it is to dwell in circles where duty is the watchword, and where their pleasures and enjoyments are such as to make participation in them acts of love and charity. Such was not the society that had surrounded Mary.

When Mr. Staunton heard the sad story of Mrs. Ellory's sudden disappearance, he saw that Mary could not be benefited by remaining longer at the hotel, and he hastened his preparations for leaving the city.

He and Mary had been frequently invited to the hospitable mansion of Dr. Root; and Hal and Everett, amused with Mary's accounts of her adventures at the

hotel, called frequently to pass an evening in her company. At length the day came when Mr. Staunton was to leave. Friends came to the vessel to say adieu, and wish a pleasant voyage. When Everett bade Mary good-bye, her voice trembled and her eyes were suffused with tears.

He left the ship with the rest of the party, and remained on the wharf so long as a trace of the vessel could be seen in the dim distance. He could distinguish Mary's figure, and watched the waving of her handkerchief until they were out of sight. Then turning his steps homeward, his thoughts were absorbed in retracing the events of the last few weeks which were now buried in the past—not to be forever lost—no, every word, and act, and thought of good or evil, however trivial, will have its resurrection. On his way home Everett passed friends without seeing them, and stumbled against baskets of apples and candies on the sidewalks, and was shouted at when crossing the street in the midst of carts and carriages.

His family hinted that evening, and pretty fearlessly, that he was more interested in that "singular girl" from whom he had parted, than they thought wise or conducive to his happiness. But it is of little use for friends to be surprised or interfere in these likes and dislikes, "for love comes and goes, and no one knows how, nor why, nor wherefore."

We must leave Mary and her father to wend their way across the deep, occupied with their own hopes and fears; and how unlike! Mr. Staunton almost sinking under the burthen of his heart's cares; and Mary scarcely able to define the meaning of life, so little had she been taught of its responsibilities and dangers. Beyond the present her thoughts seldom rose.

CHAPTER XII.

More than two years after the events narrated in the preceding chapters, the city of New York was visited with unexpected and painful financial calamities. Failures occurred daily among the wealthiest and most experienced business men, bringing severe trials to many a hearth.

The idolized daughter of a household, born in the lap of luxury, and upon whom the tenderest care had been bestowed from her infancy, bade adieu to loved ones, and sought a new home among strangers, in order to throw her mite into the exhausted treasury. The long cherished home of ease and comfort was abandoned for a more humble fireside.

At almost every corner of the street half clad women might be seen shivering in the bleak chill winds of December. It was pitiable to see men who had till now with honest industry earned their daily bread, go out at night and with downcast look of shame ask at the door for a little bread for a starving family. Young girls in hundreds were dismissed from employment, upon whom fathers, mothers, and young children had depended for support, and none but the God in Heaven knew what these must suffer.

The day had been dark, and the heavy clouds that obscured the light threatened a severe storm. Mrs.

Skimp, a thin, sharp-featured woman, who kept a cheap boarding-house in an obscure but respectable part of the city, stood by the window, apparently watching the weather with an anxious eye. A man had just left the house, and still remained upon the steps buttoning his overcoat to the throat to keep out the searching wind. Mrs. Skimp had given him the last dollar in her possession to quiet his threats and silence his loud invectives against her, for having obliged him to call so often for five dollars, and refused to supply her longer with bread if this difficulty of payment continued. A young lady, dressed in deep mourning, sat in the parlor upon the sofa, which was one worn and dilapidated like the rest of the furniture in the house, and had listened to the conversation that had passed between the woman and the baker. She looked pained and troubled.

"I can't live *this* way," said Mrs. Skimp, turning from the window and looking at the young lady. Taking out a greasy pass-book from her pocket, she glanced over the contents and continued, "and here is my butcher's bill, that must be paid to-night or I'll hear abuse enough. I am worn to a skeleton from working day and night to keep body and soul together; while fine ladies like you can sit all day at your ease doing nothing. It is more than a month since you have paid me one cent. I am tired of hearing that you are hoping to get this situation and that situation. It is all a deception I believe. You don't mean to find employment. It's my opinion you are too proud to work; and though you look upon yourself as something above me, I can tell you I think myself too good to sit at any one's table and owe them a dollar. I can't live in this way. I'm half crazy being dunned from morning till night. You must find some one else before to-

morrow night upon whom you can impose. I've seen fine ladies before."

"Pray do not speak so unkindly," said the young girl, bursting into tears. "I have indeed tried very hard to find a situation. The times are such that the most accomplished teachers find it difficult to obtain employment. I have answered several advertisements, but find they require more than I can conscientiously say I could teach."

"Umph!" interrupted Mrs. Skimp, with a sneering laugh. "I wish you had conscience enough not to cheat a poor creature like me. I can't be put off with tears and nonsense like this, and the sooner you give up your room the better I'll like it. Here is an advertisement I took out of a paper I found in Mr. Fink's room; and if you are very anxious to get something to do you had better see to it at once."

"To-night? Do you not think there will be a heavy storm very soon?" replied the young girl. "I am afraid to go out so late alone; it is almost dark now, and this advertisement comes from a street very far up town."

"Well, if that is not affectation," said Mrs. Skimp; "how many girls as good as you have to go out all hours of the evening alone? I'd like to know what better you are than my Mary; and she comes home from her work at eleven every night of her life. If people behave themselves they needn't fear being insulted."

"I will go if you advise me to do so," interrupted the young lady, rising and looking out of the window.

"To be sure I do. I *must* have your room to-morrow, for I shall be in the street soon myself if I keep people who can't pay their board in rooms I can rent."

Mrs. Skimp had a little conscience left, which smote her when she saw the delicate young creature leave the house, for the wind blew a hurricane, and it was almost impossible to keep one's foothold upon the slippery pavement, which was covered with sleet.

Another scene was enacted in a different quarter of the town, while Mrs. Skimp was laying a few plates of thin bread and butter and some herring upon her tea-table for a set of woe-begone looking clerks, who pay her but three dollars a week for their board and washing, being satisfied with the meagre arrangements of the landlady, in consequence of the exterior of the house, which presents a respectable appearance, and is supposed by their friends to be well and generously kept.

In the upper part of the city, a large, well-built, massive mansion attracted the attention of lovers of art, by the beauty of its architecture. It was occupied by an old gentleman, well known as a person of wealth and influence, who had gathered around him many luxuries from every clime. He had already dined on the day of which we write. Several guests had departed early, on account of the approaching storm, and the old gentleman had retired to his library. Seated in a large arm-chair before a grate, in which blazed a cheerful soft coal fire, he soon fell into a pleasant train of thought. His faithful servant, Joe, a young boy who seldom left his side while he took his twilight nap, was crouched upon the floor, and had been dozing before his master closed his eyes. Upon a small table at the old gentleman's right hand lay a pair of gold spectacles and a gold-headed cane. He had spent the greater part of his life abroad associating with the most refined of every country, but had recently

returned to his native place to pass the evening of his life in repose. It was often a subject of surprise to his friends, that one without a family of his own should choose so large a house and live in such magnificence alone. To these queries he replied: "I owe many a fellow-creature a good turn for all I have received from strangers in my time. The Lord has a long account against me."

"Joe!" exclaimed the old gentleman, starting from his chair, "you sleepy dog, are you dozing? Rake that fire. Those dark-eyed gypsies in it have been troubling me an hour past. Look at them torturing those poor creatures who are holding out their emaciated hands to me for aid. See that half-frozen urchin asking me for a penny. Stir them up, Joe."

"You are dreaming, sir," replied Joe, rubbing his eyes, "the fire would be destroyed by the weight of my finger upon it! It is your head that's troubled you, sir, from the wine at dinner."

"Stir up the fire!" repeated the old gentleman, "and close in the shutters. Hark! What was that?"

Joe aroused himself and listened.

"What did it sound like, sir? Where was it?" inquired Joe, afraid to go in the direction towards which his master pointed as the spot from whence it seemed to come.

"There it is again! Did you not hear it?" asked Mr. Lincoln. "It was like a stifled moan, or it may be a gentle ring of the door-bell."

"The Lord preserve us, sir," said Joe, "don't ask me to open the door. I'll not be able to live after the fright I'd get if there should be any thing there."

"You'll see nothing worse than yourself, you silly fool. Open the door!"

"Oh! murther! murther! I can't walk, sir, for the wakeness of my knees. Please, sir, leave the door closed," implored Joe.

The old gentleman by this time was sufficiently aroused to see that he had been dreaming. He rubbed his eyes and asked some questions about the length of time he had been sleeping, and, after some difficulty, persuaded Joe that the noise heard was that which the wind made sweeping through the streets. It had torn off some of the tin roofing from the building opposite, and had rent an awning near into ribbons.

The old gentleman again fell into a restless sleep. Joe, stealing behind him, placed his back against his master's large chair for support, and fixed his eyes upon the door, which he seemed to fear would open supernaturally if not well watched. Joe believed in ghosts, and why not? Hadn't he seen them many a time! Hadn't he seen a big black cat in the road, one dark night, that he followed with a big club, and didn't it every now and then turn its head clear around, to look at him, and every time it did, wasn't it a man's face it had?

"Wu! wu! wu! wu!" said Joe, gathering himself into the smallest possible space, and falling heavily against the chair, startled his master, who thought he was falling from Mont Blanc.

"The door bell rings again; do you not hear it, you sleepy dog?" said the old gentleman, in a commanding tone.

"Please, sir, wasn't you dreaming again? It's the lobster salad that's throubling you now, sir."

"The what? You scoundrel go to the door."

Joe obeyed, mentally calling on angels and archangels to come between him and harm. He soon re-

turned to the parlor with a broad laugh upon his honest face.

"'Twas no lobster throubling you, but the prettiest young creature, Master, you ever laid your eyes on, and she wishes to see the *lady* of the house, sir." Joe tittered and put his finger to his mouth, and turned his head around to conceal his merriment; for there never had been a lady of the house since he came to it. Mr. Lincoln had always been silent on the subject of his state of life. All that the servants knew was, that his noble house lacked the presence of a wife to give light and life to the comforts garnered within its walls.

"Prettiest creature, Joe?—where? what? where is she?"

"In the hall, sir, a weeping, and dripping wet."

"Ask her to come in—this is a fearful night—ask her to come in," said Mr. Lincoln, putting on his gold spectacles.

A young lady dressed in deep mourning entered the library. A partial glance at her face was all that Mr. Lincoln could gain through her veil. Its beauty was heightened by an expression of sadness which touched his generous heart. He extended his hand to give her welcome, and, after the usual salutations, inquired in a respectful tone, "Can I do any thing for you, my child? You seem in trouble? What tempted you out this stormy night?"

The young lady took from her pocket an advertisement for a governess, which purported to come from this house, and handed it to Mr. Lincoln.

The old gentleman read it, and re-read it, and then returned it to her. "My dear young lady, this is a mistake or a hoax!" he said, "I did not advertise. My young friends are fond of these jokes against me,

sometimes. I regret it, if you have given yourself any trouble to answer it. This is a fearful night. If it will afford me the opportunity to be of service to you, I shall be grateful for the occasion."

"Excuse me, sir, for venturing here. Necessity alone could have induced me to do so. You do not require a governess? I am sorry, sir."

"No," said the old gentleman, an involuntary smile stealing over his face. "I do not; but pray let me insist that you remain here to-night, if you are alone and far from home. I may aid you to-morrow. Do not fear; you shall be quite safe here. Call Hepsey, Joe, and order a fire in the red chamber for the lady," said Mr. Lincoln, without waiting for a consent; asking her to be seated he sank again into his easy-chair.

"Thank you, sir," replied the young stranger, timidly. "I will return to my boarding-house;" and then she added, "I have no *home* to go to, but I will return to my boarding-house and call again to-morrow, perhaps your kind lady—"

"Ah!" interrupted Mr. Lincoln—"Ah! I see you fear your friends will become alarmed by your absence. Well, perhaps so."

"I have no *friends* in the city who know that I am in need."

"This is a night when one should not turn a dog from the door," he said, in a low whisper. "You must not go, then. I insist upon it. You have no home! poor child! Don't be distressed. No one will be alarmed at your absence? I see it all! Here, Hepsey, show this lady to the red chamber, and attend her. If she prefers not to appear in the parlor let refreshments be sent to her room, and let no one disturb her. Do you understand? She is far from home and

alone, and must not be allowed to go out again on such a night as this."

The young lady mentally prayed to be directed, and then, "Thank you, sir," was said, in a low timid voice. She left the room, followed by the faithful old servant, scarcely understanding why she had the courage to do so. While passing through the long marble hall, her mind was filled with strange fears and doubts of the safety and propriety of the step she was taking, but a thought of the benevolence of that old man's face dispelled them. They reached the broad staircase and ascended it. Unlocking a large mahogany arched door, Hepsey threw it open wide, and respectfully stood back for the lady to enter. The room was furnished with taste, and in a style befitting a palace. The heavy damask curtains, supported by a rich gold canopy over the beautifully carved rosewood bedstead, the mirrored wardrobe, the inviting couch, and many articles of luxury with which she was surrounded, made her feel as if Aladdin's Lamp had produced the work of enchantment and suddenly transported her to this palace of comfort.

"Strange indeed are the ways of Providence," said the young girl, looking around her.

"Did master expect you, Miss?" said Hepsey, laying the silver candlestick in her hand, on the table, and lighting the gas.

"No," she replied; "he could not have done so. He could not have known that I would come."

"He ordered this room prepared for company to-day," said Hepsey. "I s'pose he thought the storm would bring somebody here to-night."

"Where is your mistress, Hepsey? They call you Hepsey, I believe?"

"Just hear that wind," said Hepsey, turning to-

wards the window; "but don't be afraid, child, it always comes a howling down the chimney or knocking like folks on the blinds as if it would come in. Don't be afeard, lady. My missus? Where's my missus? Laws! I've no knowledge of any. Massa is both missus and massa, too, since I came here."

"Is she dead?" she inquired.

"That 'ar I can't tell. I spec so, for Massa Lincoln never told in my hearin of her livin, an so I s'pose she's dead."

It was all very strange, and the young girl felt half inclined to go back to —— street, even at that hour, in spite of the storm; but then the thought of the truthful, earnest sympathy of the old gentleman reassured her, and she took off her bonnet, and her wet cloak, and prepared to remain all night. Hepsey hung them in the wardrobe and took out a fine cashmere wrapper and a pair of embroidered slippers, which she put on. After laying upon the bed a nightdress of fine cambric, Hepsey said she would go and order a nice supper for her, and bring her a little wine to keep the cold out.

The orphan girl could not but feel that she was in an enchanted palace, far removed from the world in which she had lately struggled; and yet it was all reality. She was still in the heart of the city; the cold city whose streets she had walked closely veiled in search of employment during so many days. She was still in the city. It was no dream; she heard the carriage wheels roll by, and the sound of many feet on the pavement under her window. A stranger had opened his door to her in an hour when she had almost despaired; and who could tell but God had directed her there. How good and kind Mr. Lincoln must be, thought she.

Hepsey returned with a tray full of tempting

delicacies, and urged the young lady to partake of them.

"If you have no mistress, who prepared these articles?" inquired the stranger, taking up the wrapper.

"Massa tells Mrs. Betsey the housekeeper to keep the drawers and wardrobe filled with these kind of things, and if a friend or stranger comes they are all ready for 'um if they needs 'um. That's how massa likes to keep house; massa keeps all the time just like hotel, Miss; but it's just like if it was the Lord's; for so many strangers, poor people, come and see him, that have lost their circumstances like in the world, and you know 'when you do it for one of these, you do it for me,' the Lord says; and that's the way it is, massa calls these the Lord's friends he is entertaining. I often think the Lord sends him a mighty deal of company, for when one goes, another comes. Massa won't let me complain on it either."

The young girl was inclined to smile at poor Hepsey, although she could not but find edification in her simple story. According to the good woman's ideas she had fallen into the best of quarters, and she would try to sleep till morning.

"There now, don't feel afeard," said Hepsey, drawing the drapery of the bed around her charge before going away; "there's nothing to harm you in this house no how; now go to sleep and dream; for you know they say the dream that comes to a body in a strange house, will be the dream that can be depended on."

The door closed behind Hepsey, and the stranger listened to the sound of her step slow and heavy until it was lost in the distance; then drawing the soft cover-

ing closely around her, she fell into the following reflections: "This is a strange adventure. Can it be that I am not dreaming?" (Closing her eyes to encourage sleep.) "I am sure he is very good and kind. I need not fear. I wish *he* needed a governess. Who could have put the advertisement in the paper? He has no wife? Had he ever one? It may be that his wife died. Perhaps he has been treated unkindly by her! Who could treat him unkindly? How the wind blows! Was that the wind or some one pulling at the shutters? She held her breath a minute to listen. Thoughts came more irregularly, confusedly, and less connectedly, and then they came obscured, and presently grotesque shapes and forms filled her imagination until sleep fell upon her, and she dreamed that her gentle mother came to her while she was hurrying through the streets at night, and walked beside her, and wrapped her cloak around her, to shelter her from the rough wind and storms that were blowing upon her loved one. She dreamed that she spoke cheering words of better days, and then in a voice of heavenly sweetness said, 'Adieu!' and vanished from her sight. When she awoke a tear was on her cheek, but she could not remember that she had wept in her dreams. The following morning Hepsey told her that Mr. Lincoln was waiting to speak with her, and if she pleased she would show her the way to the library. Mr. Lincoln rose to meet her, and taking her hand led her to a chair near the table in the centre of the room, and then seated himself opposite to her.

"I cannot thank you sufficiently for your kindness, sir, in permitting a stranger—"

"A stranger," interrupted the old gentleman, "we are not *strangers;* all brothers and sisters; and what

right have I to close my doors against any one of God's great family? Are we not all travelling the same journey? and have we not one home, one father to reach? No, no, child, God help those who look upon their fellow-creatures as strangers. You are looking for a home in some kind family as governess, you told me last evening?"

"Yes, sir," she replied, blushing.

"Poor child, you require a brave heart to carry your burthen. You are no doubt tenderly cared for and loved by your parents. Where are they now?"

She made no reply. Mr. Lincoln readily understood the cause of her tears, and continued: "Ah, I see; they have gone. Well, well, God protect you. Don't cry, child. It is hard for one so young to be left alone; but you will meet kind hearts, and warm hearts, don't fear. Now tell me your plans, and let me see if I can aid you in them."

"I am looking for a situation as governess, but am afraid I cannot find one. It is nearly three months since I came to New York, and I have found no place yet. My father died while I was at Marvel Hall, and my mother, unable to sustain herself under the affliction, died three months after, leaving my little sister and myself alone. My aunt has adopted my sister. My mother supposed that my father was wealthy, and we lived in affluence; but upon an investigation of his affairs it was found that he was very much in debt. It was a hard struggle for me to leave home. I did so, and came to New York. Having but little money left after my wardrobe had been supplied, it was necessary to find a cheap boarding-house. I introduced myself to a young girl in the cars, who proved to be the daughter of a widow in —— street, who kept a boarding-house, and

would gladly receive me for a moderate compensation. I went home with her. It was difficult for me to make myself agreeable to the family, who were very common in their tastes and ideas. I often gave them offence unconsciously. After the first month they treated me with rudeness and unkindness. I took the last dollar from my purse and gave it to my landlady a month ago, and since then I have suffered more than I can describe. Last night I was desired to leave the house if I could not pay my board, and I ventured in the storm to answer the advertisement which seemed to come from this house. I was ashamed on such a night to be seen out, and when I reached your door I hesitated a long time before I could ring the bell; but my necessities gave me courage, and I could not turn back. I thought that I would rather die than return and meet the abuse I must receive from the woman to whom I was indebted." She had given this statement in a low and stifled tone of voice, interrupted by sighs, that showed how deeply her heart suffered.

Mr. Lincoln had not interrupted her, and remained gazing in her face without speaking until her embarrassment reminded him of the reverie into which he had fallen.

"Pardon me, child," said the old gentleman, "I was thinking of my niece. She too is motherless. When I am gone, should she be forced to struggle, could I forgive—but no matter;" brushing away a tear from his eye, he continued, "she is with me under my care; her father is in Europe. I was thinking that although she is too ill to study she requires a companion."

The young girl hesitated. It was not the position she had expected to occupy, and though he seemed so kind, might he not, she thought, look upon her as an in-

ferior. At this idea her proud spirit rebelled, and the color rose to her cheek.

Mr. Lincoln saw in the hesitation that she did not like to accept the offer he was about to make.

"Come with me and see my niece," said he, "and I am sure you will not hesitate, Miss—by what name may I address you?"

"Miss Sinclair," replied Isabella, "my father was Robert Sinclair of—"

"Robert Sinclair!" exclaimed Mr. Lincoln, "Robert Sinclair of Aberdeen, Scotland, was the dearest friend I ever possessed. My brother; more than a brother to me."

"He was my grandfather," said Isabella.

"How well I loved him!" exclaimed Mr. Lincoln, starting from his chair. "I have long been indebted to him. He gave me valuable assistance many years ago when I needed it sadly. Thank God I can return it now. 'Cast thy bread upon the waters,' do you remember that? I knew we were not *strangers*. Something told me so," taking Isabella's hand and shaking it heartily, "come, come at once to my pet's room," said the old gentleman, still holding her hand, and walking rapidly through the hall. Hepsey passed them and whispered to Joe, who was at that moment carrying the morning papers and letters to his master's room, "that she thought massa had taken an uncommon likin' to the sweet young lady." They reached a room on the right side of the hall opposite the dining-room, and Mr. Lincoln knocked gently, fearing to alarm his niece by an unexpected entrance so early in the morning.

"Who's that, Maggie?" asked a gentle voice within.

"Uncle!" was the reply before the maid could

open the door. "I've brought a friend of mine to see you, my dear," said Mr. Lincoln, presenting the stranger.

A scream of joy was all the old gentleman heard when Isabella clasped Alice to her heart. "My Bella," "My dear little Alice," was all they could say, until they had exchanged the most earnest inquiries and looks of love. Alice gazed upon the deep mourning which had taken the place of Bella's beautiful dresses, for which she was once envied above all the pupils at the Hall, and Isabella noticed with sad fears the unearthly beauty of her dear little Alice, from whose deep blue eyes the light of heaven seemed beaming, so full were they of that angelic expression of love and peace, which is sometimes given to patient suffering; a kind of halo from above, encircling the favored one.

"Why, Bella, is this you? When did you come? I feared you would never come and see me;" said Alice, again throwing her arms around Isabella's neck.

"Dear Alice," replied Isabella, "since I saw you—" here she paused—"What has happened?" said Alice, "why do you cry?" "The door of my home is forever closed and strangers are there now. Oh! Alice, I have lost my dear, dear mother, and my father too." The sobs of the afflicted girl overcame Alice. Mr. Lincoln stood by astonished and much affected by the meeting of the young friends, and he left the room, unwilling to intrude upon their interview.

"Do not cry," said Alice, "we have guardian angels, and our mothers may be those angels. Is not the thought delightful?" The child raised her head from Isabella's shoulder and shook back the curls from her face. Tears were on her cheek, but in her eyes there beamed so hopeful a smile, that no one could

doubt her own faith on the subject. "I never cry now for my dear mother, Bella, for I fear to grieve her by doing so."

Isabella felt reproved when she saw the sweet resignation of one so young, and she became more calm, endeavoring to forget the painful subject which had opened anew the grief of her heart. She related to Alice how unexpectedly she had become acquainted with her kind uncle, and how gladly she would, if possible, avoid the necessity of returning to the boarding-house.

In about an hour Mr. Lincoln returned to Alice's room, and after a little conversation with Isabella urged her to write to her uncle of the offer which he wished to make her. He insisted also that she should send for her trunks at Mrs. Skimp's and remain with Alice until an answer came from her uncle. Isabella did so, and wrote unreservedly of the toils and disappointments she had endured in her search for employment. She described Mrs. Skimp's dissatisfactions, and the protection offered her on that stormy night by Mr. Lincoln, who proved to be her grandfather's friend. She did not conceal that she knew nothing of his state of life.

With Alice the time passed rapidly while her old favorite sat by her side. They read and talked during the day and evening, and Isabella thought if she could always live in such a home, where no unkindness of thought or word was heard, she could yet, even in her loneliness, find peace and happiness. She could not believe that her uncle would object to Mr. Lincoln's proposal. To her it seemed generous, and a more advantageous situation than she had hoped to find. But Isabella was sadly disappointed. The anticipated letter came, and peremptorily forbade her remaining one day

after the receipt of his letter. "Mr. Lincoln," her uncle said, "might be a good man, but he had not acknowledged to the world whether he was married or unmarried, and this circumstance was sufficient to make it imprudent for her to accept his offer. The world would justly censure her for so doing. Isabella gave Mr. Lincoln her uncle's letter, hoping that it would elicit an explanation. "He is right, child," was all the reply she received from the old gentleman, though the pained expression of his face, and the tears in his eyes, showed how keenly he felt the obstacle in the way of her happiness. On the following morning the poor girl parted with Alice, bathed in tears. She could not express her gratitude to Mr. Lincoln; but stood before him without speaking, weeping violently. "God bless you, child," said Mr. Lincoln, and she left the house and returned to her old boarding place.

Again in the crowded streets wending her way alone from place to place, to answer advertisements that required an interview, how often the consoling words, "never so well cared for, as in the hour that seems darkest," came to her mind.

A lady in —— street desired a governess. Pleased with Isabella's modest manner and unaffected humility, she engaged her for one year, offering a very moderate salary, although requiring more of Isabella's time than it seemed right or just to claim. Isabella acceded to her terms, having found it almost impossible to obtain a situation in consequence of the hard times of which every one then complained. Her trunk was carried one cold afternoon to the house, and Isabella found the lady with whom she was engaged was Mrs. Saunders, who will be remembered as the lady in green spectacles at —— Hotel. Mrs. Saunders introduced her daughter,

Margaret, to Isabella, as her pupil, and with whom she must spend all her time. "I do not wish you to allow this girl out of your sight," said Mrs. Saunders, taking hold of the shoulder of the pouting child, who pulled away from her grasp, sulkily, muttering: "You hurt me."

Mrs. Saunders' manner and nature were cold, and the house looked cold. The window panes chilled the moisture upon them, and the servants looked pinched and cold. When Isabella entered, Mr. Saunders was buttoning on his overcoat to go out after breakfast, and looked cold and lank, and the dog who followed him kept close to his side shivering with cold. Mrs. Saunders had a worsted scarf tied over her head, and a shawl wrapped around her, and could not understand why they were talking of the cold. *She* did not feel it. Mrs. Saunders kept the key of the pantry, and did not see why any one needed lunch on short winter days. *She* did not feel hungry till dinner at six.

Isabella's heart sank low at the life she saw she must lead within these walls. Dreary was the prospect of passing a year with people so unrefined in their nature, but she remembered the deficiencies of her education and resolved to employ every leisure moment in study, and to fit herself for something better. Mrs. Saunders allowed her very little leisure, taking care to leave the younger children under her care when Margaret's lessons were over, to which Isabella had not courage to object. Here in this soulless abode we must reluctantly leave the poor orphan girl with her struggles, and tears, her alternate courage and despondency, her mortifications and trials. Deal kindly, generously, gentle reader, with the stranger within thy gates.

CHAPTER XIII.

Mrs. Meredith of New York, and the eldest sister of Mr. Staunton, resided at Hollygrove in England, a beautiful country seat, not many miles from London.

Her husband, Col. Meredith, an officer in the British army, whom she had met during a temporary residence of her family in Europe, died in India soon after their marriage. His widow (now past fifty) had remained at Hollygrove, the beloved lady and mistress of the manor house, endeavoring to soften the poignancy of her trials by doing all in her power to raise the drooping spirit, and comfort the distressed within her reach. To the young she became a confidante, and to the aged a consolation. In her manner there was a dignity that might have been mistaken for hauteur had not her pleasant smile dispelled the impression.

Her household consisted of a retinue of well-disciplined servants, who were devotedly attached to her, and one or two female dependants. A disabled brother officer who had saved her husband's life at the peril of his own, spent the greater part of the year at Hollygrove.

The gallant old major in his shining uniform and well-dressed wig, might have been mistaken for the

presiding genius of the place, had not the gentle manner of Mrs. Meredith expressed "so far, and no farther."

Mr. Staunton, since the reader last parted from him, had spent more than two years on the continent of Europe, and had endeavored during that time to awaken an intellectual fire in the mind of his child. The task was a difficult one. The gayeties of Paris almost turned her brain with giddy pleasure. The picturesque and sublime mountains of Switzerland filled her with an ecstasy of wild delight. The lovely scenes and beautiful works of art of Italy, softened and refined her taste. But the impressions made by the wonders of Rome were faint and fleeting. There were no associations with the past in her mind, no sympathy with the poets fired her imagination, no long-remembered story of her childhood awakened memories of the noble deeds of the dead. Old ruins and disfigured marble columns had no beauty to her eyes. She liked the music of Italy, and loved to wander through her picture galleries. Wearied with his journeyings, Mr. Staunton directed his course to the old manor house at Hollygrove, and reached the long-remembered spot in midsummer, when nature wears her richest attire.

The aged porter drew back the heavy gate, and the carriage moved slowly through the winding avenue, which was thickly bordered with flowers of every hue.

"Here we are at last," said Mary, springing from the coach, which had stopped before the grand portico; "what a lovely retreat, father! Look at that queer looking old gentleman pacing the piazza in regimentals, father. Look! Look! he is taking off his hat and bowing to us. Who can he be? A sentinel I suppose, who guards Aunt Edith. He is approaching us."

"My dear," replied her father, "do not speak so loud. He may be a visitor of distinction."

"Good morning, sir. Walk in. Most happy to welcome you. Mr. Staunton, I presume," said the major. Mr. Staunton bowed, and replied, "your most obedient." "Major Trevalyan," continued the major, putting his hand to his heart and bowing low. Mary was introduced by her father. Again the major bowed.

"I hope you are well, Miss Staunton; welcome to Hollygrove. Mrs. Meredith received letters several days since, and has been daily anticipating your arrival." They were met at the door by Mr. Staunton's sister, who embraced him affectionately, and then turning to Mary, said: "This is your dear child," and while holding Mary in her arms continued, "your dear uncle so longed to be permitted to meet you, my dear;" dashing away the tears, "we must not shut out the sunshine from our hearts by regrets for the past. Thank God you have returned at last. I almost wearied looking for you." "I can hardly believe I stand in the old manor house, Edith," said Mr. Staunton. "Here where I passed so many happy days with my angel Irene, on our first visit to you from New York; and here I come back again to lay my troubles at your door."

"This is no time for sadness, dear brother," said Aunt Edith, leading the way to the reception room.

After the salutations of welcome were over, Mrs. Meredith accompanied Mary to her room, followed by Maggie the maid. Crossing the broad hall they passed through the library; it was a spacious room lighted by the dome, furnished with several thousand of well-selected volumes. Two young ladies were reading, seated in cushioned high-back oaken chairs, and near them a gentleman stood looking over a large portfolio

of engravings that was supported by a stand. Mrs. Meredith smiled, bowed to the young ladies, and passed on to Mary's room without speaking. It was large, and the lofty ceiling would have given it an air of loneliness and discomfort, but for the many articles of luxury with which it was furnished. Heavy drapery hung around the high canopied bed and windows. Old china vases stood upon the mantel filled with sweet-scented flowers. A curiously wrought ivory work-table, lined with red satin, and furnished with every kind of sewing material, stood near the window; and on the other side of the room was a writing table and desk of japan and gold. A large table stood in the centre of the room covered with books, and near it an inviting soft-cushioned chair. In this Mrs. Meredith made Mary sit down, while she untied her bonnet and unfastened her travelling-cloak with her own hands. Mary felt uncomfortable under the scrutinizing glance her aunt gave her, while she stood before her.

"You are truly welcome to Hollygrove, my dear," said Mrs. Meredith, "and from this moment look upon it as your home, my child. My dear brother and your departed mother were my idols. I love you because they are dear to me." A liveried servant entered, bowed before Mrs. Meredith, and announced a party of young people from London.

"I must go to the drawing-room, my dear; Maggie will assist you in dressing. Pray join us as soon as possible."

After Mrs. Meredith left the room, Mary looked around her. A feeling of awe crept over her. Every thing looked strangely to her, so regular, so proper.

Nothing, it seemed, had been forgotten for the comfort of the occupant of that room. She could have wished

there might have been something to find fault with. "Aunt Edith was very kind," she thought, and affectionate in her manner, and very handsome; but so stately, so dignified and reserved. Mary feared she would never love her.

"Please, Miss Staunton, give me your keys," said the maid, after Mary's trunks had been left in her room. Mary took from her pocket several keys, some candy, and with them half a dozen bits of paper, and a vinagrette. Selecting the trunk to be opened, and the key, she desired Maggie to take out her light blue silk dress, and her coral ornaments which she would find near the top. "Did you ever see such pell mell?" said Mary, standing before the open trunk, amused at the maid's look of surprise. She laughed immoderately. "I suppose Aunt Edith would be shocked at the sight. It is well she did not remain You do not see the dress I wish to wear. Toss up the contents until the right one comes up. Don't be afraid." Maggie asked permission to take out the articles one by one and lay them upon the bed. After Miss Staunton had gone to the drawing-room she said she would arrange every thing neatly in the wardrobe and drawers.

"Mind you are not too orderly, or I can never find any thing myself," replied Mary.

When Mary's toilette was finished, Maggie could not but acknowledge in her own mind that the young American lady looked remarkably well. Her dress was in the latest Parisian style, and became her fine figure. Her hair under the care of a skilful hairdresser had become beautiful and luxuriant, and was arranged in a style that gave softness to her expression.

When Mary entered the drawing-room, her father

rose to meet her, and presented her to the group near him.

"My daughter Mary, Miss Ellsmere, Miss Gertrude Ellsmere," said Mr. Staunton. Several ladies and gentlemen in riding dresses were amusing themselves near the window conversing with Mrs. Meredith, while Major Trevalyan was pointing out to them some of the prominent beauties of Hollygrove. A gentleman who had been sketching in one of the recesses of the window closed his portfolio and approached Mrs. Meredith. Her rich brown brocade silk and high ruff of plaited English lace did not lessen the formality of her appearance to Mary. The artist, for such he seemed to be, was fair haired, with regular features and a fine form, though one that lacked strength. He had grown less attentive to the old lady's remarks, for his eyes were directed towards Mary, from the time she entered the drawing-room.

"Pardon me, madam, who is that interesting stranger seated near Miss Ellsmere?" he inquired.

Mrs. Meredith crossed the room, and presented Mr. Wallace Humphrey to her niece; "my American niece," said Mrs. Meredith, smiling.

"Mr. Humphrey was happy," he said, "to meet a lady from that country which had become so celebrated. The infant giant, if he might be allowed the expression, had astonished the old world." Mary looked puzzled; the comparison did not strike her as a complimentary one. Mr. Humphrey, the country, and the infant giant, became so confused in her mind that she could not tell what to reply. Mr. Wallace continued his remarks in so high flown and poetical a style, that to Mary it was like an unknown tongue. But Miss Ellsmere, his cousin, answered him in the same strain, and seemed

charmed with her own eloquence. The wonderful resources of the western hemisphere for geological researches were discussed. On points of difference of opinion, Mary was called upon to decide. As may be expected the sad blunders she made exhibited in a glaring light her ignorance on those topics of information.

Major Trevalyan joined them, and relieved her embarrassment, by replying to the questions asked by Miss Ellsmere, who seemed to take a malicious pleasure in continuing a conversation which showed her own mind and education, by contrast, to advantage. The major had been in Canada in service, and was well acquainted with the natural and political history of America.

"I will keep near this old gentleman," thought Mary. "He is fond of talking, and will do my share for me."

Mr. Humphrey went to the library and produced some Indian curiosities, which had been brought from Canada by the major.

This was intended as a compliment to Mary, but she could not help wishing the race extinct, for these relics of antiquity would introduce subjects of which she knew nothing.

"Your American author, Cooper," said Miss Ellsmere, "has afforded me many delightful hours. His description of forest life is interesting in the extreme."

Mary smiled and looked interested. She had heard of Cooper, but what he had written—prose, blank verse, or rhyme, she had not the least idea.

"It has been a question with me," said Gertrude, (the younger sister,) "whether I would prefer Eastern luxury and magnificence, or the simple natural life of the forest. I am tired and weary of excitement. I

think I would revel in the repose of forest life. A tent spread upon the green sward, surrounded by high oaks and pines. The music of a thousand birds to awaken me at dawn of day, and the chorus of the soft winds to lull me to sleep at night. How delightful! How romantic!"

"You would study the clouds and the stars and see them reflected upon the leaves and the bark of the trees, and seek their impress upon the moss in the deepest recesses of glade and glen," said Wallace, ironically.

"Yes," she replied, "I have read of Indian girls whose knowledge of nature could make you blush for your ignorance, Mr. Humphrey. No doubt Miss Staunton can give us some interesting instances of cultivation and refinement among them."

Gertrude, Miss Ellsmere, and Mr. Humphrey, looked towards Mary. A faint idea of a lesson learned in "Indian wars," at the cost of tears, was all she could remember of Indians or Indian life. Mrs. Marvel had read aloud to a class of inattentive girls an illustrated book on Mexican antiquities. Some hieroglyphic representations of men with hatchets in their hands, was all she could remember now. What this had to do with the life Mr. Humphrey and Gertrude had described, she could not possibly imagine. Her confusion was painfully apparent.

The major read in a glance her cause of embarrassment, and related a touching history of a beautiful Indian girl, to whom one of the British officers became attached. "She was lovely and innocent, and pure in mind as an angel. She loved my friend with her whole heart. Her truthfulness and simplicity were charming. Her husband, whom she idolized, grew weary of her, and left her. Not by one murmur of complaint did she re-

proach him. But hours, and days, and weeks, she had sat at the door, watching for his coming, until she faded, drooped, and died."

A silence followed this sad account, which had produced a depressing influence upon the group surrounding Mary. She, too, had been interested, but the predominant feeling in her breast was intense mortification at her own stupidity; and the contempt with which she must be regarded by these learned people.

The party that had arrived that day from London had retired to dress for dinner, and at this moment entered the drawing-room.

Lady Howard, Ellen and Antoinette Howard her daughters, Mr. Ellerton, a celebrated young tourist, and Mr. O'Dash, were introduced. Mr. O'Dash was a wealthy young Irish gentleman, and one of a class whom we consider unworthy the name of Irishman. He had been educated in England, and therefore considered himself PURELY ENGLISH, notwithstanding the bewitching accent upon his tongue, and the captivating ease of manner truly and inimitably Irish! The ladies had come out to Hollygrove to enjoy a pleasant ride, and see their old friend Mrs. Meredith. To the eldest Miss Howard, Mr. O'Dash was an object of sentimental interest, although he neglected her, and paid the most devoted attention to the younger sister, to whom he was an insupportable bore.

Dinner was announced. Mr. Staunton offered his arm to Lady Howard, and the major bowed a la militaire, before Mary. The dining-room was beautifully furnished, and the table laid in magnificent style. When they were seated, Mary glanced around her. The ease with which the young ladies sustained a lively conversation with the gentlemen seated next to them,

surprised her. There seemed to her a continual flow of wit and humor. The major, with the cleverness of a man of the world, drew Mary into a pleasant account of school life, and topics with which he knew her to be conversant.

"You must remember," said Mary, in a confidential tone, "that I am only a school girl, a very stupid one, with no experience of the world, except what I have gained while travelling with my father. If you will allow me," she said, smiling, "I am going to keep under the shadow of your wing."

The major laughed heartily. Mary joined him, and Miss Ellsmere declared the company must have the benefit of the joke. "She knew very well," she said, "that a young lady so silent as Miss Staunton, must be brilliant when she vouchsafed to speak."

Before the second cloth was removed, Mrs. Meredith, who noticed Mary's mirth, cautioned the major against the wiles of the young American. Mr. Humphrey added a warning against the influence of gold buttons, which amused the old gentleman exceedingly.

The ladies retired to the drawing-room, and gathered around Mary. They asked many questions of her travels, to which she replied with humor and nonchalance. She related a hair-breadth escape in the mountains of Switzerland, where they were attacked by robbers disguised as guides; and told them a romantic adventure she had in Venice, promising to show the young ladies a note which was thrown to her in a bouquet of flowers, by a young nobleman, with whom she protested she would have eloped but for the timely interference of her father. She described how she had horrified the stately dignity of the German ladies with whom she became acquainted by her American independence.

She attempted to describe but little more than these romantic occurrences. She could speak of the vastness of St. Peter's, of the dark passages of the Catacombs, the ruined abbeys and castles she had visited; but was so ignorant of the people by whom they were built or inhabited, and why they were attractive, although Mr. Staunton had explained every object of interest to her, and had told its history when visiting it, that her uncultivated mind retained little more than a faint impression of what he communicated. During her travels the expression of her face had become bright and cheerful, and her nature had become more gentle under the influence of the kindness and affection with which her father treated her. Some persons had considered her handsome and attractive in manner. It is not surprising then, that Mr. Humphrey whispered to Gertrude Ellsmere, that there was something in Miss Staunton's face which he liked; there was something remarkable in the expression of her full black eyes, and the proud curl of her lip. The music of the harp and piano in the drawing-room drew the gentlemen from their wine. Mrs. Meredith requested Mary to sing. She sat down to the piano and sang an English ballad.

When Mary had finished the song, Mr. Staunton left the drawing-room to hide his emotion. Mrs. Meredith whispered to Mary,

"You remind me when you sing of your angel mother, Mary. She charmed us with her sweet voice."

Miss Ellsmere begged Mary to sing again, and the major handed her to the piano. She sang a lively air with much spirit. At the concluding lines of the song, "Ring, ring the bells merrily, joyously, cheerily," the applause bestowed upon her was enthusiastic and quite embarrassing. The major and Mr. Humphrey paid

some gallant compliments, and the young ladies congratulated themselves upon the pleasure they might anticipate during their visit from such delightful music. Lady Howard and her party regretted that they must leave such charming society, but they were forced to bid adieu to accept an invitation to a ball given that night in the neighborhood. They said, however, that they would not return to the city until they had paid another visit to their hospitable friends.

CHAPTER XIV.

The following morning a note was handed to Mrs. Meredith at the breakfast table. They had sat long, and had discussed the occurrences and pleasures of the preceding day, and had also remarked upon the probable and improbable results arising from the attentions paid by Mr. O'Dash to the younger Miss Howard, and the disappointment the elder sister would experience.

"My nephew, Walter Meredith, will be here to-morrow in company with a young friend whom he has invited to spend the summer at Hollygrove," said Mrs. Meredith, refolding the note, and placing it in the envelope.

"Walter was a noble boy when last I saw him," said Mr. Staunton, "a mere child then, he promised well. What has been his training? I am very glad he is coming home while we are here."

"My good husband, you know, had an idea that discipline of mind and body were indispensable to great achievements," said Mrs. Meredith, "and it was under this rule that Walter has been educated."

"Tempered by your indulgence, no doubt, Edith, his plan has worked wonders, and produced a prodigy of worth and goodness! Well, be it so."

"I have no reason to complain. Walter is all I

could desire. A little too impulsive *you* might think, perhaps."

While they were speaking the major rose from the table, and asked Miss Staunton if she would like a walk on the lawn. It was his custom to spend an hour in the library after breakfast, and then walk to the grove, which was not far from the house, but the morning was fine, and "he was sure," he said, "she would be benefited by the open air."

"Let me not interfere with your rules, Major," said Mary. "I would prefer spending an hour with you in the library."

Following him there, the major took down for her some interesting illustrated works on American history, and laid them upon the table. Mary sat near him and listened with attention to his explanations and remarks. Before the hour had passed she had gained more valuable information than a week's study alone could have given her. A volume of American poets was then opened, and the major read several passages, pointing out their beauties of style and sentiment.

When they left the library, Mary ran to her room, tied on her bonnet, and was ready to accompany him in his walk to the grove.

Passing a fine statue of Napoleon, which was one of many that ornamented the grounds, the old soldier paused, and asked Mary to remark the thoughtful expression and attitude of the great hero, and said, "one might imagine his reflections were upon the fleeting vanity of worldly glory." The major gave her a graphic sketch of the life of the great warrior, "whose fame," he said, "had been world renowned, who had held kingdoms in the hollow of his hand, but died an exile on the barren Island of St. Helena, where the

waves of the ocean beating against the desolate shore, sang a perpetual requiem over the grave of his departed strength and power. Alas! how unstable is our happiness, how vain our hopes, when unsupported by the Almighty arm of the most High."

"You have been in many battles, I suppose," said Mary. "I would like so much to understand how they are fought."

They sat down upon a rustic seat near the walk. The major drew the plan of a battlefield with the point of his gold-headed cane in the sand, and fought again the great conflict of Waterloo.

It was a subject that called forth all the enthusiasm of the old man's heart. He related many noble deeds of generosity and heroism he had witnessed among the soldiery of which the world never knew. He spoke of the self-sacrificing suffering that had been endured for the love of country by generous hearts, receiving no compensation except the consciousness of having been good and faithful servants. He portrayed with lifelike truthfulness the agony endured by the soldiery in their retreat from Moscow, and the desolation that event brought to the hearts of thousands. Mary was interested, and fancied she had witnessed the struggle on the battlefield, that she had heard the roar of the cannon, and seen the deathly glitter of steel.

"I must not monopolize your time, Miss Staunton," said the major, rising. "Your aunt must be disengaged at this hour, and will seek your society. I have already trespassed too long, I fear."

"No, indeed," replied Mary, "and with your permission I will join you in your walk to-morrow if I do not interfere with other engagements."

The major assured Mary, with the gallantry of a

man of twenty, that nothing could afford him so much pleasure as her society. They walked slowly to the house, and met Miss Ellsmere and Gertrude, who were taking a botanical lesson from a maiden lady who had spent an hour with them every morning. Approaching the green-house she saw her aunt engaged in gathering flowers, and in giving orders to the gardener. Mary joined her.

"Is not the morning air delightful? How the birds sing!" said Mrs. Meredith. "Look at these beautiful flowers with the morning dew still upon them. The warm sun fills the air with their perfume. Upon each leaf is imprinted a sweet lesson. Let us read it together, Mary." Mary looked up inquiringly. Her imagination had not been as yet awakened by many lessons from the book of nature. "Take these flowers to the library, my dear," continued Mrs. Meredith. "I will soon follow you, and we will examine their beauties with the microscope. Upon that leaf," (pointing to a green rose leaf in Mary's hand,) "which to us appears so fair, we will find myriads of insects that are feeding upon it, and drawing its life blood. What an emblem of the human heart—its passions the insects!" Mary accompanied Aunt Edith to the library and took up the microscope.

"Oh! Aunt, they frighten me, I can see them now," said Mary, while examining a leaf. "I'd be sorry to have you, or any one else, see my heart as plainly as I see these monsters. There! there is one great creature catching some tiny little ones, and eating a dozen at a mouthful. He has made a large hole in the prettiest part of the leaf."

"It must be *pride*," said Mrs. Meredith, smiling. "Small animals are creeping all around it," said Mary;

" some black, some spotted. This dreadful creature eats them when they come near enough."

" Those are envy, vanity, and self-love, upon which pride is nourished," continued her aunt, amused by Mary's gravity.

" Please don't, Aunt," said Mary. " I cannot hold the glass if you make me think my heart looks any thing like this. There now," (laying aside the microscope,) " how beautifully soft and lovely that leaf looks to the eye. I am sorry I saw it as it is. Are there really so many insects living upon it? Are they not in the glass? "

" Just so many, my dear," said Mrs. Meredith, " and just so many surrounding your heart."

" Oh! Aunt," screamed Mary, covering her eyes to shut out the sight of herself, " you do not really mean any such thing. Why, I'd hate, I'd loathe myself if I could believe it."

" Have you ever examined your heart, my dear," replied her aunt. " Think of the most wicked thing you ever did. What were its consequences? To how many other wrong acts did it lead? How did you overcome it? If you did not overcome it, has it not grown since then until you can scarcely hope to vanquish it? Have you ever read Johnson's Allegory of the net-work that habit spread over his victim? "

" Please do not talk so, Aunt," said Mary, " the idea is dreadful to me. But it is not really true? "

Mary saw, as if in a glass, the form of little Alice.

Mrs. Meredith noticed that the color receded from Mary's face, and she was sorry that she had pained her by her remarks, which she intended should instruct and amuse her. Mr. Staunton entered the library, and Mary escaped from the room through the opposite door

without a word of apology, throwing down the microscope, and leaving the flowers strewed upon the table.

"Where is Mary?" inquired her father, "the postman has left the letters. I have one from America for her."

"I have just given her a lesson in botany," replied Mrs. Meredith, still amused at the effect it produced, "but I fear my suggestions were too grave for her sensitive nature. She seemed quite excited by them."

"The poor child has been sadly neglected," said Mr. Staunton, seating himself near his sister. After a moment of silence he continued in a sad tone, "but I can perceive a breaking away of the darkness in which her mind and heart seemed enveloped when I found her on my return to New York. I was sadder, dear sister, when I first beheld my child, than when I saw the spirit of her beloved mother depart. It was not alone the loss of wordly wisdom; that could be acquired; but I found her devoid of *principle*." He paused, and sighed. "Can I confess it to you? devoid of *faith*. A *woman* without faith I look upon as deprived of all that is attractive. A mere mortal, without the divine essence. I must say a monster; and this, dear Edith, I found my dear child, for whom I had suffered patiently years of toil. Thank God I have had strength to be patient and gentle with her." He walked two or three times the length of the library without speaking. "I ought not to have exposed my poor child's weakness even to you, dear sister. But you will pardon a father's want of confidence in himself. I fear my ability to guide Mary, and I come to you as to a physician from whom I must conceal nothing. I know you will advise me what course to adopt for her development and improvement."

"I will do all in my power, dear brother," said Mrs. Meredith, deeply interested.

"Here is the coach," interrupted Mr. Humphrey, entering the library. "Here is the coach an hour before the usual time. Walter has come, and his friend with him."

"That face is very familiar to me," said Mr. Staunton, going to the window. "Can it be possible? What could have brought Everett Root to London?"

Before a remark could be made by Mrs. Meredith, the major, who was always in the portico when visitors arrived, had welcomed them, and Walter was in his aunt's arms, declaring she had grown young since she had been blessed with his absence.

"My friend, Everett Root," said Walter, introducing the young gentleman who accompanied him. "Never mind the ruff, Aunt," said Walter, "I can only come home once a year, and you must submit to a little tossing of the plaits while I am here. One more kiss, Aunt, and I'll behave with circumspect decorum the rest of the day."

"Walter, your uncle, Mr. Staunton," said Mrs. Meredith.

Walter bowed respectfully, and approached Mr. Staunton, who took his hand and shook it heartily. "Can I believe this is Walter Meredith, the lad who won my heart by his bravery fifteen years ago?" said Mr. Staunton.

"Do you remember me, sir?" replied Walter. "You wished me to hide in your knapsack I remember, and you said you would carry me to India." Mr. Staunton laughed, and related some other circumstance connected with the occurrence. "A little girl in fair curls broke up the adventure," said Mrs. Meredith.

"Ah! yes," replied Walter; "my first love! Gertrude Ellsmere, you mean, Aunt."

At that instant Gertrude entered the library with Mary Staunton, who was leaning upon her arm. Gertrude had found Mary alone in her own room, in a "fit of the blues," as Mary termed it, and she had persuaded her to come to the library or picture gallery, where they would find something to amuse them. The sudden appearance of the young lady of whom he was speaking, and whom he had not seen for several years, surprised Walter very much. Mary's astonishment when she saw Everett was expressed by a bound towards him, and a warm and cordial salutation in which she manifested more pleasure than would have been deemed dignified in an English lady.

"You are the first person whom I have seen from home since I came to this country," said Mary, "and I cannot tell you how glad I am."

"'This is indeed an unexpected pleasure, Miss Staunton," replied Everett. "Allow me to say I scarcely recognized you. Two years in Europe have made great changes, believe me."

"For the better, no doubt," said Mary, her unrestrained laugh ringing through the whole library. Mr. Staunton saluted Everett. Walter and Gertrude exchanged some pretty compliments in formal speeches spoken in a subdued tone, and an embarrassed manner. Mrs. Meredith requested an explanation for the enthusiastic salutation given to the young stranger by her niece.

"The only reason I can give for being so very glad to see Mr. Root," said Mary, "is that he is an American; and I have been absent long enough from home to know how I love my friends and my country."

"Is it because I am not an American, cousin Mary, that you do not speak to me?" inquired Walter. Mary replied, "that she was not aware of being 'cousin Mary' to any one, but she assured him she was happy to see him."

"Well, Aunt," said Walter, "you are happy now that the old mansion is filled. I came near inviting a party of Americans to pay Hollygrove a visit. They were Everett's friends, and invited me to spend a week with them in London. I accepted the invitation and we had a glorious time."

"Is not Everett handsome, Gertrude?" asked Mary, when Walter and Everett left the library to go to their rooms.

CHAPTER XV.

n that be Mary Staunton of Marvel Hall,"
t Everett, when she entered the dining-room
g upon the arm of the major, who appeared to
rett to take unnecessary care of his "little protégé."
was laughing at some joke perpetrated by the major in his own pleasant but solemn manner, and did not notice Everett until she was fairly seated opposite to him at table, by the major's side.

"I do not know why it is," said Mary, in a low voice, "that I feel quite happy when I am near you, major. I am not afraid of you although you are very, very dignified. I do not dare to join in conversation with those young ladies," (looking over to the Misses Ellsmere.) "They talk for hours of people of whom I never heard. I'm afraid cousin Walter and Everett will become tired of my company while these young ladies are here. Do you know," she whispered, in a confidential tone, "I never really disliked them till to-day. Is it not strange?"

The major assured her that she had no reason to fear. That her candor and simplicity were more fascinating than their learning.

"Indeed I have neither," said Mary, making a courageous effort to speak the truth. "You do not believe

me, I see; but it is true; I seldom think of right or wrong."

The major considered her confession the accusation of an over-sensitive conscience, and shook his head.

Walter inquired from the lower end of the table, if "cousin Mary" would join him in a welcome to the Americans present to merry England. Mary replied by a nod of assent. From that time until the cloth was removed, Mary took part in the general conversation with less embarrassment than usual, and looked brighter and more interesting than her father had ever seen her. After dinner Everett sat down near Gertrude, and was discussing an interesting topic with her, in which there seemed to be a rivalry as to who should introduce the most beautiful and apt quotations from the poets. Mary listened to their flow of language with an envious ear, and grew every moment more dissatisfied with herself. Everett seemed charmed, and the evening had nearly passed before he remembered that he had spent the whole of it by Gertrude's side. Walter had been, during the last hour, giving his aunt an account of the beautiful and interesting child of the American gentleman whom he had met in London, and so far excited her interest in the family as to make her regret that he had not persuaded them to visit Hollygrove.

Mary turned over the old music upon the music-stand near the piano again and again, and affected an interest in it; but Everett's marked forgetfulness of her presence, was the only thought of her mind.

"I owe you an apology, Miss Staunton," he said, at length. "I ought to have remembered that you would wish to hear from your friends in New York,

but please blame that charming young lady rather than me."

"I have no friends in New York, Mr. Root," replied Mary, endeavoring to appear indifferent. "I am not aware that you have any cause for an apology. I do not accept it, for, believe me, I have not noticed your inattention."

"Do you sing?" inquired Everett, taking a song she held in her hand.

"No," replied Mary, "except when the major asks me to sing," she added after a pause.

"Ah! I see how it is," said Everett.

"Gertrude will sing for you, and play upon the harp."

"Do favor me, Miss Ellsmere," said Everett, addressing Gertrude.

Gertrude after a little persuasion played some fragments upon the harp, with exquisite sweetness and expression. The beauty of her fine form and intellectual face was not unnoticed by Everett. She reminded him of paintings he had seen of St. Cecilia. When she sang, her soul and sense seemed lost to every thing but the music; and her own feelings were imparted to the listeners through the varied expression that played upon her features.

"That is exquisite," said Everett, "soul-stirring. The gift of song is truly a heavenly one."

"Now Mary will sing you one of her Italian airs," said Gertrude.

"I only sing for the major," said Mary, coquettishly.

"Here is the major," replied Everett, "just in time to give us the opportunity of hearing you, Miss Staunton." Mary blushed, and hoped the major had not heard her remarks. She sang one of her favorite airs.

Her voice was at first low and plaintive like the music of an Æolian harp, upon which the mournful winds of an autumn evening were playing, but gradually it swelled into tones of deep pathos that awoke emotions of intense sadness; then the song changed to an allegro movement. Her countenance became animated, and from her eyes there beamed an enthusiasm of which Everett had not supposed Mary capable.

"Bravo! bravo!" exclaimed the major, applauding loudly. "Bravissimo," repeated Everett. "You are a perfect Italian in song, Miss Staunton." Mary thanked Everett for his pretty compliment, and said, "it was pleasant to hear his praise, though she must believe he flattered her."

"Will we take our walk to-morrow morning, Major?" asked Mary, turning from Everett.

"If it will afford you pleasure," replied the old gentleman, "and not deprive you of more agreeable company."

"Then we will go," said Mary, willing to give Everett an idea that she preferred the major's society.

Mrs. Meredith, Mr. Staunton, and Walter, had withdrawn to a large window in the hall, and were talking of days gone by, and of days to come. The moon shone brightly in upon them, and lighted up some of the old paintings upon the wall, which made them look like spirits of the departed who had come to join them. Mary had said good night to the ladies in the drawing-room and paused in crossing the hall. She wished to speak to her father, but Walter was with him, and she hesitated. Mr. Staunton saw her and rose to meet her.

"I'll wish you good night, father," said Mary. "I'm very weary and out of spirits to-night."

"Out of spirits, my dear, you never had more reason to be cheerful."

"I've learned this evening," said Mary, laughing, through tears that would come, "I've learned that I am very stupid and disagreeable; and that you and every one must find me so." Mr. Staunton led her to the window, and placed her in the chair by his side. Laying her head upon his shoulder, she hid her face, to conceal her discontent, which was manifested in the condemnation that she continued against herself.

"You are too humble, cousin Mary," said Walter.

"No, I am not," replied Mary. "Aunt Edith knows I am not. *You* left me to-night because you were weary of me. Everett and Gertrude forgot I was in the room, and left me alone to turn over the musty leaves of the old music on the piano."

"It is better that you should retire, my dear," said her father. "You are not well; these are imaginary trials."

Mrs. Meredith followed Mary, who rose to go to her room, in obedience to her father's suggestion.

At that moment Mr. Humphrey came in in great spirits. He had been out all day, and succeeded in his sketches; had met with some laughable adventures, and been fished up out of the lake into which he had fallen while sketching, by a party of gentlemen from London who came out upon an excursion of pleasure. On board was a fortune-teller, who told him his life had been spared to gladden the heart of the prettiest pair of black eyes in the kingdom; and he meant, he said, to go in search of them at once. "I need not go far to seek my fortune," continued Mr. Humphrey, looking at Mary familiarly. Mary did not hear the remark.

She left the room with her aunt before the sentence was finished.

"No, not far to seek your *fortune*," said Walter, who had not been noticed by Mr. Humphrey. "You are aware that Miss Staunton has a *fortune* worthy the efforts of a fortune-hunter, but beware how you attempt such a game."

"What do you mean to insinuate, sir?" said Mr. Humphrey, in an angry tone.

"That you are an unprincipled fortune-hunter, and I can prove it," replied Walter, coldly.

"Come! come! old chum, none of your nonsense, we must be friends, Walter. I do not mean to look at your fair cousin, I've other darts to feather. You shall have the field alone; come, let us shake hands? It would be a shame to abuse hospitality by a vulgar brawl under this sacred roof. I forgive you, Walter; good night."

Walter followed the figure of Wallace Humphrey until he had closed the door, and then smiled sneeringly, saying in a low tone: "The contemptible puppy, the hypocrite, why did he not resent the insult I offered him?"

"Walter, these sentiments are unworthy a man, and do not belong to the heart of a Meredith, my boy," said Mr. Staunton, whose presence had been unnoticed by Humphrey.

"I despise that fellow, and cannot endure his presence, uncle," replied Walter. "He dared to flatter Cousin Mary. Let him keep his compliments for his London associates, who are not insulted by them; but let him not approach Cousin Mary with his sordid attentions. He need not forget that I know him well," continued Walter, wiping his brow, "he does not forget

that I saw him crawl into the bosom of a happy family, and there leave the deadly sting of the viper; gaining the affections of a confiding young heart merely to show the power of his attractions, and leaving her then without an explanation, as soon as he found that a *fortune* could not be gained by the alliance."

CHAPTER XVI.

The following morning, Mary was seen leaning upon the arm of the old soldier, and walking slowly through the grove, not far from the house. Sometimes they would pause, while Mary seemed to listen with marked attention to the earnest tones of the major. Then they would walk on again with a measured step. Mary sat down upon a low moss-covered seat by his side, and looked earnestly in his face, while he talked of the beauty of the landscape before them, and drew her attention to the wonderful adaptation of things to the wants of man.

"Sentimental, upon my word," said Humphrey, approaching them. "I would not object to exchange places, Major Trevalyan." Mary rose. "Give me the secret of your power, will you, Major?" he continued. The major was about to reply, when Everett joined them, and Wallace glided away out of sight.

The major could understand the cause of Mary's preference for his society; and it left but little room for vanity in the officer's heart. Vanity is a tiny seed, and will take root in the smallest possible places sometimes. It had deposited itself in a dark little corner of the major's heart, almost out of his own sight, and was growing daily. He could not help wishing he was

younger, and that Mary could love him. To teach her would be a delightful task he thought, and to form her character and bring it up to the high standard which he had formed of woman in his mind, would give him more happiness than he could ever realize, he feared.

"There is much to admire in the character of your niece," said the major, who left Everett and Mary, and joined Mrs. Meredith on the portico, where she was seated with her embroidery. Every room in the manor house bore testimony to Mrs. Meredith's industry. "She is full of enthusiasm, and has a strong will."

"My brother tells me," replied Mrs. Meredith, "that she has been cruelly neglected. I hope that the guardian of her youth has sinned from ignorance rather than intention. There is still time enough for the acquisition of much worldly knowledge; but I fear it is late to expect the growth of faith in a heart where the seed has never yet been sown."

While they were speaking, Everett and Mary were approaching the house slowly.

"Mrs. Marvel flourishes like a green bay tree," said Everett. "Crowds of children are flocking to the hall, and the woman actually persuades the public that she is capable of educating young ladies in a style that cannot be equalled. I met some of her pupils in Washington last winter; they had the MARVEL STAMP, and might have been recognized in any quarter of the globe."

"What is that?" inquired Mary, amused.

"The stamp I speak of is the affected, unnatural, empty-headed simper, which her pupils put on when they have assumed their parlor face. Accompanying this is a sneering disrespect for people who do not dress, or act, or live, as Mrs. Marvel has taught them is genteel;

a disregard for the presence of older persons, and no respect at all for the aged. *Dress* is their object in life; and *fashion* their god. Several pupils have left the Hall, to attend Mrs. Marlborough's school, the very opposite to that of Marvel Hall. The ladies who graduate with Mrs. Marlborough are charmingly modest and unobtrusive in their manners. They are *natural* and agreeable; well educated and accomplished. Mrs. Marlborough is herself a lady, and can therefore preside with dignity over an establishment which is a credit to New York, and *not a public calamity.* Marvel Hall is scattering her hundreds over the country, and spreading disunion and unhappiness in married life to a frightful extent."

"Who were those Americans in London, of whom Cousin Walter spoke?" inquired Mary. "Let us not talk of the Hall." "Mr. Lincoln, and little Alice, his niece," said Everett. "Alice is the most interesting little creature you can possibly imagine. What a pity that she is delicate. It is for her benefit they are going to Florence. The woman who has caused that child's ill-health should not allow herself a moment's happiness, but day and night bewail her iniquity. My father thinks the neglect she endured at the Hall has caused her sickness."

Mary grew pale, and became so much agitated that Everett offered his arm to support her in walking to the house. "You have remained out too long this morning, Mary," he said anxiously.

"Has Alice been very ill long?" inquired Mary.

"Yes, her nervous system received a shock while at Marvel Hall, that will cause her a life of suffering, if a premature death come not in mercy to save her from it."

Mary drew a deep sigh, and Everett tried in vain to arouse her. When they reached the house she excused herself to her aunt, whom she passed on the portico, and went to her room and closed her door. She threw herself upon her knees by her bedside, and hid her face in her hands. But not a word, not a thought, did she raise to heaven. A heavy, fearful cloud rested between her and the throne of grace which faith alone could penetrate. Visions of the past floated before her in confused images. She saw Alice sleeping; saw her awake and fix her eyes in terror upon her distorted face. She heard her scream and then saw her convulsed. She saw her revive, and suffer day and night excruciating pain; then day by day fade away and die. It was a vivid picture, and drove her almost to despair. Gladly would she at the moment have died to shut out the terrific thoughts that were crowding upon her excited brain. Conscience was awakened and spoke fearlessly. It would be heard if but for a moment. Long the unhappy girl remained in this agony of self-reproach, unconscious of time or place. Her maid entered unnoticed, and gently begged to be allowed to assist her, for she looked very ill, she said. Mary started at the sound of her voice, and rose trembling violently. "The young ladies and gentlemen are going out to ride on horseback, and will soon be ready. They have been inquiring for you, Miss Staunton," said the maid. Mary sank into a chair before her mirror and was shocked by the death-like palor of her face.

"Take down my hair, Mag, she said, I am too much fatigued to go out to-day. I'll lie down till they return. Come to me in time to dress for dinner. Awake me then. Say to my father that I have gone to— No,

tell the truth. Say I am not well. Tell no one; not even my aunt Edith, that I am in my room, unless you are questioned, Mag."

The maid obeyed, took down her hair, and assisted her to the couch; closed the shutters, and drew the curtains down to darken the room, in order that she might sleep; but Mary could not. It was new to her of late to sorrow about any thing, and new to feel compunction. Bitter was her remorse, and hopeless it seemed to look for a remedy. She thought of the disappointment and anguish Alice's friends must suffer, (for Mary had learned the depth of a parent's love.) She thought of all the bright sunny days of youth Alice might have known, but for that one wicked, cruel act of hers that had darkened her existence for ever; and it appeared to her that she was not worthy to stand in the presence of a human being on the face of the earth. Humbled and despairing, she wept from her inmost soul. Would that she could have then blotted out her sin with those tears; but a God of justice required a greater sacrifice than this—a more purified offering.

The door was opened gently before Mary had remained more than an hour alone, and Aunt Edith came in like a ministering angel, and sat down by the couch. Laying her hand upon Mary's forehead, she said in a soothing tone of voice:

"Are you ill, my dear? you look greatly troubled. Has any thing occurred to make you unhappy?" Mary, without raising her eyes, replied:

"Everett told me this morning of the sickness of one of my schoolmates, which has made me more unhappy than I can express to you."

"Is she dangerously ill?" inquired Mrs. Meredith.

"It appears from Everett's account that she is hopelessly so," said Mary in a whisper.

"My dear Mary, do not weep. You must not allow your feelings to be over-excited. You cannot benefit your friend by your grief, and you will injure your own health. I am glad to see that your heart is tender and sympathizing; but it is not well to indulge in too much grief, my child. Come, dress, and join the gay party outside. They are waiting for you. The air is fine, and the country through which you will ride beautiful. Your good father left early this morning to prepare a feast for you and the young people. When they arrive at the glen, it will greatly disappoint him to find you are not of the company. For his sake, my dear, hide your sorrow, and accompany the party."

The inducement was strong, and Mary exerted herself to rise. Mrs. Meredith rang the bell for Mag., who soon obeyed its summons, and Mary was dressed in a dark green riding-habit which had been made in Paris, and fitted her fine form remarkably well. It was buttoned to the throat with silver buttons, and ornamented across the breast with rows of black velvet. Her riding-hat was of green velvet, in which a large plume waved gracefully.

The color which the excitement of the morning had brought to her cheek, and the subdued light of her large black eyes, produced by the sadness of her spirit, added softness to the expression of her countenance.

Everett could not conceal his admiration when she mounted, with grace and ease, the spirited pony which had been selected for her.

"Can this be the young lady I met at the hotel two years ago?" whispered Everett.

"In very many respects not the same," replied

Mary gravely; "*that* young lady was afraid to breathe in your presence. This one is quite indifferent to your praise or censure."

"Do not be severe, Miss Staunton, I beg pardon, if I have offended you; I only intended to compliment you upon the improvement which time and acquaintance with the world have made."

"And to do so, you remind me of a period of my life which I detest and wish to forget."

"I was wrong, Miss Staunton. I hope you forgive me."

"The ladies are calling you, Mr. Root," said Mary, waving her hand towards Gertrude and Miss Ellsmere.

"Excuse me," said Everett, "I *must* say adieu for a short time." Mary appeared quite satisfied with the arrangement; and allowed "Cousin Walter" to adjust her dress, and ride by her side. Mr. Humphrey joined Miss Ellsmere. Aunt Edith gave a few admonitions, and the party was out of sight, wending their way through a country that might have reminded one of those luxurious landscapes of the east. The balmy air laden with perfume, acted like a charm upon Mary's troubled spirit, and enabled her to conceal her sorrow.

"Why did not the major accompany us?" inquired Mary. "He would have read me a beautiful lesson upon all that we meet. I begin to understand his instructions; they are beautiful; the smile upon his own face will make the gloomiest temper cheerful; I wish he were with us."

"Take care or you will *love* him, cousin Mary," replied Walter.

"Love him?" replied Mary, laughing at Walter's fears, "I *do* love him. I can't help it. I loved him

the first day I sat beside him at dinner. Do you not love him, Walter? I thought every one loved the major."

"You love him, Mary? why he is old enough to be your grandfather," said Walter, vexed at her avowal.

"I love him just as I would my grandfather. Is there any harm in that, Walter? Take care, Walter, your horse crowds too closely, do you not see you have slackened your rein too much?"

"No *harm* in it, but some danger, cousin Mary."

"What danger is there in loving a person just as you would love your grandfather? Would you think there was much hope for you, if a young lady loved you *just* as she would love her grandfather?"

Walter made no reply and rode in silence by her side several moments, and then changed the conversation.

"You have spent some time on the continent, Mary?" said Walter. Mary bowed her head.

"You have seen much no doubt?" continued Walter, "and have a store of pleasure from which you can draw in years to come. That is a happiness which I have yet to anticipate. What a noble fellow Everett Root has shown himself to be. I cannot sufficiently admire the generosity of his character. Indeed he is a prince by nature. When his collegiate course was completed, he carried away the highest honors; yet with all this merit and distinction he was simple as a child, and was beloved by the lowliest as well as the most distinguished of his companions. One of his class-mates labored day and night to complete the course in half the usual time, because a widowed mother depended upon him for her support. The poor

fellow denied himself every comfort in order to economize. He succeeded in his efforts and received the diploma, but the evening of the day of his success, a letter came containing the news of the death of his mother! It was a dreadful blow, under which he would have sunk but for the support Everett gave him. Everett went to London with him; supplied the means for the funeral expenses, and remained with the young man until he was calm and enabled to take a situation under government which Everett procured through his influence and means. This deprived Everett of a trip to the continent; for the means allowed by his father for a season in Paris, had been spent in this act of generosity, of which no one would ever have heard, but that the young man whom he assisted, related the circumstance to me, and it led to my acquaintance with Everett. Since our introduction we have been firm friends."

"Firm friends?" repeated Mary. "You have been firm friends! My heart has only known one friend—my father. Must it not be desolate? Do you confide all your thoughts and troubles to your friend? Can you tell him *all* your sorrows, as well as your joys?"

"All, and find true sympathy," replied Walter.

"What a relief it must be to find one who can help you to bear your burthen; for I begin to think that every one has sorrow." Walter looked surprised. He had thought Mary one of the favored few to whom care had not yet come. She continued in a half soliloquizing tone:

"You will find it hard to believe that until I left Marvel Hall (more than two years ago) I had never loved a human being. Nor was I loved by any one around me; I hated, oh! how I hated those who were

called better, handsomer, more attractive than I was. My heart rebelled against the scorn and contempt which I felt I created; and I was sometimes fearfully wicked in my plans of revenge. But what a change has come over my pathway of life. Since then I have learned to love and to be loved. I have gained position, wealth, and with them power. I defy the world to crush me now, for I feel strength within me that can resist it."

Mary drew herself up with dignity, and might have felt pride in her appearance at that moment, had she been conscious of the queenly beauty that shone in the expression of her face when she added: "I have learned that there are weapons more powerful than revenge, and I no longer regret my existence as once I was led to do. But truly, deeply, do I regret that my past life has not been what it should have been. Everett's noble generosity towards his poor afflicted class-mate makes me more sensible than ever of the gratitude we owe to those who cultivate our hearts and lead us to that which is good. Do you believe that Everett was by nature good, and would have been so under any circumstances? I do not. My dear father has comforted me with a belief to the contrary. He tells me I was by nature gentle, affectionate, and extremely sensitive. By neglect I became ungovernable, cruel, hardened, and wilful."

"And what has produced the change which all who know you must acknowledge? You are far from being now the character you represent yourself to have been when a child."

"You must not flatter me. I am too proud to like flattery."

"You are right to condemn flatterers, but pray do

not class me with them. No man can flatter a woman whom he respects, and you are too sensible not to have seen the ill taste "—

"Nor must you preach either," interrupted Mary, "I only listen to sermons given by grey heads."

"The major may preach, I suppose," said Walter, a little piqued.

"Yes, he may do so," replied Mary. "Where are the rest of our party? There they are at the top of that hill! I see Everett and Gertrude. Let us overtake them." Mary started her horse at full speed, leaving Walter far behind.

"I cannot comprehend that girl," said Walter to Everett, when they reached the glen. "Such simplicity and wisdom; such ignorance and knowledge. There is something irresistibly bewitching in her originality. Of this *you* seem fully aware; for I never saw any one more deeply enamored than you seem to be, Everett. Why do you not throw yourself at her feet and know your fate? I believe in the old adage, 'delays are dangerous;' and mean to act upon it on all occasions of this kind. I do not know but I will propose myself before we return, for I must own she is very interesting and natural. This is a heavenly spot. There is a chance for you now. I saw her saunter alone to that group of trees The other young ladies have gone to the spring with Wallace, now is your time." Everett followed the suggestion and walked slowly towards the spot Walter had pointed out; but before reaching it, he saw Mr. Staunton seated by his daughter's side. He stopped at a little distance from them, and in an absent mood cut the initials M. S. upon a large elm tree before he joined Mary and her father.

"This is a beautiful little nook, a fairy haunt. No doubt, Mr. Staunton," said Everett, "we are indebted to you for the selection for our pic-nic. I hope the ride has not fatigued you, Miss Staunton. You look paler than usual I think."

"Oh! not at all," said Mary. "I could not feel fatigue while in such pleasant company. Cousin Walter is always agreeable; but I think he was never more interesting than to-day."

"It was far different with me, Mary," said Everett, seating himself by her side, and whispering in her ear. "I envied Walter his place by your side. You must know that I would have preferred your company to all others of the party."

"You have been taking lessons from Mr. Humphrey, I see, Mr. Root," replied Mary, laughing and repeating aloud to her father what Everett had said.

Everett was pained and mortified. He could not understand why Mary treated his attentions in so light a manner, and why she had ridiculed his professions as insincere in the presence of her father. Mr. Staunton saw the dilemma to which Mary's thoughtlessness had led, and making an excuse, rose and left the young people to extricate themselves from it as best they could.

Mary had remarked that Everett had paused before the elm tree, and supposed he was reading something cut upon the bark. "Let us see what attracted you at the old tree," said Mary laughing. Everett walked slowly behind her while she ran on to the spot. Turning back to meet him after a glance at the initials, in the most coquettish tone and manner she promised not to teaze him during the whole day and evening, if he would put away that long face, for it made her unhappy to see it.

It was enough. The cloud passed from Everett's brow. Mary kept her promise, and all the rest of the day her laugh echoed loudest in the little glen. Everett kept constantly by her side and thought he had never known such happiness before. Since he came to Hollygrove, he had wished in vain to win a look or word of encouragement. But her unreserved manner towards him during the remainder of this day made him doubt no longer, and had he been left one moment alone with her, he would have offered her his heart before they left the romantic spot.

CHAPTER XVII.

EACH week at Hollygrove proved to Mr. Staunton, that his daughter was rapidly advancing in the way his heart desired, under the good influences that surrounded her. She spent a part of her time in reading in the library, and a portion of each day with her aunt. The interest with which she listened to her instructions showed Mrs. Meredith that she was fast gaining the confidence and affections of her niece, whom she encouraged to speak freely and without fear. They visited the poor in the neighborhood together, and Mary was frequently moved to tears by the kind tone of encouragement in which Mrs. Meredith spoke to the suffering and afflicted, and by the earnestness with which she portrayed the happiness that awaited them in a better world. The little children gathered around Mrs. Meredith, and received with smiling faces their presents of cakes, pennies, and pictures with which she was always provided on those occasions. When they left the cottages, blessings unnumbered were poured out in the prayers of these grateful people, "for the good ladies who never forgot them in the hour of need."

"You must be very happy, Aunt," said Mary, one day when they were returning home in the carriage from a round of visits to the poor. "How that poor

sick girl's face brightened when you entered the door of the cabin. If an angel from Heaven had come to visit her she could not have shown more joy. I wish I had been born to comfort the afflicted, as you have been. I would rather have your mission than that of a queen on a throne it seems to me; I have no mission. I am no comfort to any one except my father. My life seems of little value. If I were to die, I could not be missed, I am sure. I sometimes wonder why we are placed in this miserable world to suffer as these poor people do, if there is a GOD in Heaven, who could easily have made us all happy. I cannot help thinking it is very strange and unnatural, Aunt."

"My dear child," said Mrs. Meredith, "we are but as little children, and cannot understand the wisdom of God. Can an infant in its mother's arms who endeavors to grasp the burning light before it, understand why it must be denied what seems to it but a harmless glittering toy? Or, can it understand the duties of the life before it? As little can we understand the mysteries around us. When the spirit is freed from this earthly encumbrance that surrounds it, then we will see the mercy and goodness and wisdom with which our good Lord directs all these things. Till then, Mary, trust and believe with the simplicity of a little child, who obeys without doubting the parent's word. Look at this beautiful world. Do not the heavens and earth proclaim to us the bounty and love of a Supreme Being?"

"I cannot understand it, Aunt, I wish I could. When I am alone, doubt and darkness drive away the good thoughts that come, while you are speaking to me of GOD. It seems beautiful to know him, and to love him, as *you* do, and I think *I* do sometimes, but

the happiness does not last, I am doubting again, almost before you have done speaking. What can I do?"

"Pray, my dear, for *faith*, and sooner would an angel be sent from Heaven to point out the way to you, than you would be left in this blindness and darkness."

"I cannot pray, Aunt, I never pray."

"You desire it, Mary, do you not?"

"I think I do. I hope I do. Really I do not know that I do, because I fear I do not put faith in prayer. If there is a God, I'll trust to his goodness to save me. It was he created me, why should he destroy the work of his hands? And yet, dear aunt, there is something within me, that makes me fear to depend on this mercy if I do nothing myself."

"Does not this show you, my child, that you have faith; why will you stifle its growth? It has been implanted in your heart for you to cultivate. The husbandman will come, Mary, and require its fruit. If it is barren, and encumbers the ground, he will order it to be cut down, and cast into the fire."

"Do you think I will ever believe as you do, Aunt?" said Mary, who became thoughtful and troubled.

"If you desire it, my dear, you will not be refused. Faith can only be obtained from God, who seldom grants this precious gift unasked." At this moment, the carriage stopped before the large gate at the end of the avenue, and Wallace, who had come down to meet them offered to assist Mary to alight, and asked her to walk to the house with him. Mary took his arm. Notwithstanding his efforts to be agreeable, she was inattentive and uninterested till he spoke of Everett. Then she listened with an animated countenance,

and from that moment he resolved to win her favor by speaking of his friend.

"I have learned the avenue to your heart, Miss Staunton, I perceive," said Wallace, "but find it strongly barricaded. What weapons must I employ to take it captive?"

"That is more than I can tell you, Mr. Humphrey," said Mary. "I doubt if any one would find it worth the effort it would cost to gain it."

"Have you remarked Mr. Root's attention to my cousin Gertrude?" said Wallace. "I must learn his art. I have no doubt of his success. I have been told as much by Miss Ellsmere, her sister; and Everett himself has confessed his love for her to me."

Wallace had given utterance to this falsehood, in order to judge of its effect upon his listener, and in this way to calculate upon the extent of the difficulties he would have to encounter before destroying the interest which he feared Mary felt for Everett.

"I knew that Mr. Root admired Gertrude's talents and accomplishments; but I was not aware that he was in love with her," said Mary, exerting herself to appear indifferent.

"His heart is gone, and with it all peace, unless he gains hers in return," said Wallace. "I heard your father and Mrs. Meredith remark this morning that they hoped the acquaintance would end in a marriage, for Gertrude was one in every respect calculated to make him happy. Everett Root is an ambitious man, and should marry a woman of whom he would be proud in society. His superior mind and education require a companion of intellect and talent. Without these attractions in his wife, there would be no congeniality, no sympathy between them. In such a case his

love would soon be followed by an indifference, which in time would become a hateful, tiresome, life-wearing sentiment of discontent; while his poor wife would be a victim to his contempt."

"Pray forbear, Mr. Humphrey. It is unkind to imagine such unhappiness for one so good, so noble, so generous, as Everett. I could almost pray myself that he may be accepted by Gertrude, sooner than wish him to marry one not his equal in every respect."

Mary felt humiliated beyond even Wallace's desire, when the recollection of her own deficiencies crowded upon her. Wallace's remarks had showed her how unwise it would be for her to become the wife of one so far her superior in education and acquirements.

That night was one of deep sorrow to Mary. She could not close her eyes. A feverish restlessness stimulated her imagination and made her almost wild. Every word that Wallace had said was thought over again and again, and in vain she tried to find an excuse to differ with him. But it was all too true. How could she hope that Everett could love one so ignorant as herself? Would not his face burn with mortification when he found her unable to command respect in society? And then the comparisons that would unavoidably arise in his mind when women more talented, better informed, surrounded him. Would she forgive him if he admired and extolled their intelligence and attractions? No! no! she could not. It would be better to drive him from her thoughts, and try to forget she had ever loved him, than make him unhappy. Wallace was right; and it was kind to warn her. She feared she had given Everett reason to believe she preferred his society to all others; for of late they were frequently together, and she had become each day hap-

pier and more unreserved in his presence. He, too, she thought, had grown very, very kind and attentive to her. It must be that his generous wish to make her happy had been his only motive; for he had never spoken of love to her. Now it was explained why he had never done so. He *loved* Gertrude, and only *pitied* her. Mary wept long and bitterly, but the sun rose as brightly in the morning, and the birds sang as sweetly as if her heart was not sad and sick. No one knew her grief, for she concealed it at the breakfast table under the most cheerful smile; and she talked pleasantly with the major, and asked him to join in her walk, after they had spent an hour in the library together as usual.

Mary felt that the case was a difficult one, and she resolved to seek the major's advice and counsel, and ask him how she could avoid Everett in future without offending him, or exciting his suspicions of the true cause of the change in her manner.

They walked through the conservatory, and down the broad avenue, and passed through the grove. The major talked much and instructively; but his lessons made no impression. She was occupied in schooling herself to the task before her. The effort it required to speak on a subject so delicate as the one upon which she desired his advice, was of no ordinary character. Fatigued from walking, they paused at the fountain, and seated themselves under a wide-spreading oak, whose branches had waved over that lovely spot more than a hundred years, and its shade may have been a trysting place for many lovers, the recital of whose sorrows and joys had been wafted upon the breeze.

Mary had intended to speak of Everett, but by a

strange chance she introduced the subject of the early neglect of her education, which subject was seldom from her thoughts. The major spoke so kindly and encouragingly to her, that she burst into tears, and told him if he knew but half her griefs, he could not give her a ray of hope for the future. For what was fortune if the heart was sick? It could neither have life nor light while a heavy stone lay rolled against its door.

In a low and subdued tone stifled by sobs, she related the principal occurrences of her life while at Marvel Hall, and their evil influences upon her character and disposition; concealing nothing, however, in order to excuse herself. In the simplest language she described the struggles she had made since she had been under her father's care, to overcome the evil passions by which her heart had so long been bound; and the bitter heart-felt remorse which she endured when she reflected upon the fearful consequences that were now resulting from her wicked conduct, and which it seemed out of her power to prevent.

She paused in the recital, overcome by mortification and confusion. She feared she had lost all claim to the major's respect and friendship, and dared not raise her eyes from the ground.

The good old man had listened with a kindly ear to the long confession. His brow was contracted by a painful expression of sympathy, and his head was bent low in an attitude of deep thought.

"Go on, my child," said the major, "do not fear to unburthen your heart to me, if you have any thing more to say." Mary shook her head mournfully and did not reply. She covered her face and sobbed convulsively. The painful recollections with which her

confession had filled her mind, made her forgetful at the moment of the subject upon which she had intended to give him her confidence and seek his advice. It was some time before the major could sufficiently control his feelings to speak. He understood the grief of the young girl's heart, and saw in a glance the many agonizing moments she must endure in future, for the injuries she had inflicted upon the innocent child, Alice.

"Your repentance, Miss Staunton," he said at length, "will gain you merit and strength; and you may yet do much good, which will atone for those acts of your extreme youth. For your father's sake, be bold in your resolution; have courage and *act*."

It was seldom that the major addressed Mary as *Miss Staunton*. In familiar conversation he had called her Mary, or child, and this formality now, mortified and pained her.

"Is little Alice in Florence?" inquired the major.

"She is," replied Mary, crimsoned with shame. The sound of the name of Alice always brought confusion to her face, the cause of which, till now, had been pent up in her own breast, and there hidden from all *human* sight.

"Ask your father to allow you to go to Florence and see her, Mary," said the major. These words sent an electric shock of delight to Mary's heart. A light dawned upon the darkness into which her soul had sunk. In this moment of wild joy, she sprang from her seat and threw her arms around the old man's neck, and seemed half-crazed by this sudden transition of feeling. She exclaimed:

"You have saved me! you have saved me from utter despair. It seemed to me that the dreadful thought of that suffering child must haunt me forever,

and, with no means of making even the least reparation, I would waste away with her as she faded day by day, and sink into the grave despised and hated even by my father, but you have shown me a ray of light in the distance, and I do so thank you from my heart for it."

Mary's impulsive nature had carried her beyond the bounds of decorum, but the major let it pass, remembering only the pure feeling that had prompted her to the outburst of gratitude.

"How strange it is," continued Mary, again seating herself by his side, "that I should have told you this secret of my heart. But you are my good angel, I believe. You will not tell my father, Major, how very wicked I am. I know you will not. It would break his heart if he knew it. I will go to Florence and I'll take care of Alice, and she shall love me, and I'll not let her die till she has called me her *dear Mary*." Mary spoke rapidly and with excited manner. Before she had finished the last sentence her face again beamed with smiles, though her cheek was still wet with tears.

Major Trevalyan, who understood the human heart, had watched the gradual development of Mary's better nature with the interest of a father, from the first day she came to Hollygrove, and had daily seen manifestations of a better knowledge of self. He had noticed that her heart was easily touched from sympathy; the flush of indignation had crimsoned her cheek when he had related deeds of injustice done to the weak and oppressed, and she warmed with love and admiration for the generous and the noble. But till now she had not seemed to him to look within. The major knew that it was better not to discourage her by telling her that it would require years of faithful and painful care to restore her heart to the beauty with which it came from

the hand of its Maker. It had remained years uncared for, uncultivated, overrun with selfish passions. But the major had seen the beauties of the drooping flower prostrated by adverse winds, and which must have been trampled under foot, "encumbering the ground," but for the timely care bestowed upon it.

"You will not tell my father," repeated Mary; remarking his saddened expression, which she mistook for one of reproach, she added in a look and tone of supplication,

"Do not despise me; do not treat me coldly. I could not bear it."

"Miss Staunton," said the major, "I never respected you so much as at this moment. A sincere confession of your faults has inspired me with a greater admiration for your character, because it is accompanied with so much sorrow for the offence. I thank you for the confidence you have reposed in me; it shall not be abused. Try to be calm, and gain strength to enable you to fulfil the errand of love which you promise yourself. From humiliation and repentance for this sin of your childhood, may come blessings unnumbered."

"*Miss Staunton*," thought Mary, "how very cold and distant that sounds to me; but I deserve it."

"I am sorry I must leave Hollygrove so soon, Major," said Mary. "If I could remain with you and dear Aunt Edith, I would be better. How kind Aunt Edith is. She always makes an excuse for my faults, and deals so gently with me. When I first saw her I thought her very austere. It appeared to me that she would freeze me with her formality. I remember how she surprised me the first time she put her arm around me, and drew me kindly to her and kissed me. But when I first saw *you*, Major, I do not know what I

thought. I remember you were walking on the long portico, and I thought you very odd indeed." Mary laughed, and then drew a heavy sigh, and in a moment more again burst into tears. The major looked perplexed, as most men do on such occasions, and made anxious inquiries for the cause.

"Oh! I do not know," replied Mary, wiping away her tears, "my heart and its sudden changes from grave to gay are an enigma to myself. But pray do not think me strange and disagreeable."

The major wondered how any one could think her disagreeable. "All sunshine and showers," said the major, "a perfect child."

"I used to feel like a child until I came here," replied Mary, "but I have seemed, I do not know why, to have lived years in these three months past, I am so changed. I could sing and laugh all day after I left Marvel Hall; but now I am grave and I look into the future, longing and yet fearing to know what it has in store for me."

The conversation was interrupted by the breaking of a bough over their heads, and the sudden appearance on the ground of Wallace Humphrey, who had concealed himself in the tree to hear the conversation between Mary and the major, knowing that to be their favorite resort. He had heard and seen all that had passed, and when the change occurred in the subject of the conversation their tones had become more subdued, and he found difficulty in hearing. He had leaned a little too far over in order to listen to advantage, when, to his utter surprise and terror, there he lay sprawling upon the ground, having come within a hair's breadth of falling upon the poor old major, who would have been killed by his weight. The major and Mary, startled beyond measure, sprang

towards him, and inquired in one breath, if he had fallen from the clouds? He tried to raise himself from the ground, and putting his hand to his chest, writhed with pain. With his eyes turned up in agony he intimated that he could not speak, for the breath had been knocked out of his body. The major suspected how it had been, but Mary could not conceive what had brought him there. After some restoratives were administered, for which Mary ran to the house, he told an improbable story of having climbed the tree to take a view, and of his having fallen asleep and remained unconscious more than an hour until his fall awoke him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

When Wallace had sufficiently recovered to go to the house, the major, and a servant who came at Mary's call to his assistance with the restoratives, supported him, and he went limping up the lawn. He was taken to his own room without meeting any one of the family, which was a cause of congratulation to the eavesdropper. Mary hastened to her own room to bathe her eyes, which were red from weeping.

Everett had from the first week of his visit feared the major's power over Mary's mind, and had watched the growth of their friendship with a jealous eye; his jests on the subject were always warded off so dexterously by Mary, that he could not ascertain whether her interest in the old gentleman was one of a serious nature or not. That she was a coquette he had no doubt, and he tried to persuade himself that her attention to the major was intended to annoy him and excite his jealousy. Passing through the library to her own room on this morning, Mary met Everett, who was standing at the window. He had seen her and the major in the distance where they seated themselves under the old tree, but this had become so frequent a resort for their tête-à-têtes, that it excited no surprise.

He turned suddenly around when she entered the library, intending to beg an interview and declare his

love to her; but she hastened to her room without seeming to notice him, and locked her door.

The weather was becoming cool, and frequently of late, as happened on the afternoon of that day, the family gathered at an early hour in the drawing-room, around a blazing fire in the grate, which was the more cheerful because it was the first of the season.

When Everett saw Mary close the door, he left the library without knowing where he was going, and awoke from his reverie by the side of Miss Gertrude Ellsmere, whose basket of embroidery silks he threw upon the floor, scattering the contents in every direction.

"What ails you, Mr. Root?" said the young beauty, "what designs have you upon my work-basket? Please declare your intentions, sir," she continued, with emphasis, in a whisper. Gertrude had persuaded herself that *her* irresistible charms had made Everett the silent, stupid, uninteresting man he had become of late, and she was convinced that his timidity was the only cause why he had not, days since, proposed for her hand. That Mary Staunton could attract any one while she, an acknowledged beauty, was in her company, was not to be thought of.

"Declare your intentions, sir," again whispered Gertrude, while Everett was busily engaged in loosening and disentangling some skeins of silk which he had picked up from the floor.

"Would that I could do so," replied Everett, involuntarily, and the instant after the avowal he would have given worlds to have recalled the words. Gertrude's blushes showed him that he had been misunderstood. "Hang my intentions!" thought Everett, "I have placed myself in a pretty net. I must say

something at once, or I am a lost man. What shall it be? What can it be? If ever I was so perplexed. Such a whirl as my brain is in. Why the deuce am I such a fool? Can't I tell the girl at once I love Mary Staunton. But suppose Miss Staunton don't love me!" Everett's thoughts, which were coursing through his mind with lightning speed, brought an embarrassment of manner and confusion in his face that perfectly justified Gertrude in the supposition that he was making a desperate effort to propose for her.

Mrs. Meredith and Mr. Staunton entered the drawing-room at this moment, and relieved Everett from his unenviable position, while Gertrude was annoyed beyond expression by the interruption.

An hour passed before Mary made her appearance. She took her seat near the window in the drawing-room, and entered into a lively conversation with Walter to conceal the true state of her feelings, which were desponding in the extreme. Everett joined them. "How swiftly pleasant moments fly!" said Mary; "to-morrow I must leave this charming spot, dear Hollygrove!"

"And without a regret," said Walter; "I wish I had your free and happy spirit, Cousin Mary."

"One must regret to leave a spot which has afforded so much happiness," replied Mary. "Have I not grown very wise here? I feel as if I have a right to a few gray hairs for the wisdom I have gained."

"No doubt you admire them, Miss Staunton," said Everett, glancing at the major, who was approaching them to claim the privilege of escorting Mary to the dinner-table for the last time. Mary took his arm, and looking back at Everett, only replied to his remark by a smile and nod of assent, which puzzled and annoyed

him, and which, in spite of his efforts, increased his anxiety to win the wayward, strange girl, whose apparent indifference was robbing him daily of his peace of mind.

Forced by circumstances to offer his arm to Gertrude, (for Walter had taken Miss Ellsmere, and Mr. Staunton his sister, Mrs. Meredith,) he walked silently to the dining-room.

Mary was more quiet than usual at dinner, and made very inappropriate answers to very simple remarks. The major was unusually attentive to her, and endeavored to interest her, attributing her singular manner to the effect the conversation of the morning with him had produced upon her mind. And perhaps he was correct. She could not herself rightly understand the true state of her troubled heart. She knew she felt unhappy for many reasons. She felt mortified and disappointed because Everett seemed to prefer Gertrude; and she was resolved he should not know that she was jealous of Gertrude's superior charms. She could not blame him; for who could love *her* who knew *Gertrude?* But the *major* preferred her society. He was so good and kind no doubt because he knew he could instruct her; and Gertrude did not require his instructions.

"May I ask of whom you are thinking, Cousin Mary?" said Walter, at this moment, who had been endeavoring in vain to attract her attention until every one had become amused by her reverie.

"You may," said Mary, with simplicity, and smiling. "I was thinking of the major."

The major bowed respectfully, and, in a tone of irony, begged the *young* gentlemen present not to be jealous of the old soldier. If he were younger he might enter the field for her fair hand.

"It is my opinion that Mary Staunton would not refuse an offer *now* from the major," Gertrude whispered to Everett.

"Impossible," replied Everett, "such an alliance would be a monstrous absurdity."

"You speak with the spirit of one interested! Really I believe I have trespassed upon dangerous ground, Mr. Root," said Gertrude. "I beg your pardon if I have offended you."

"Not at all, Miss Gertrude. I will confess, I *am* interested in Miss Staunton. I thought you were aware of it."

"Aware of it!" she repeated, burning with jealousy and disappointment. "Aware of it! How could I be? What a monstrous absurdity!" Gertrude bit her lip, choked down her tears, and joined in the laugh against Mary and the major, to avoid being noticed by Walter and Miss Ellsmere, who were near them, exchanging shots of a sarcastic wit that interested and amused only themselves.

CHAPTER XIX.

EVERETT excused himself as soon as the ladies left the table. Wallace Humphrey had sent a messenger to him to say that he had something of importance to communicate to him; and begged him to come to his room after dinner. A fall, he said, would prevent his appearance at table that day. Wallace lay upon his bed not wholly unable to rise; but the shock occasioned by the fall had weakened him, and he had been advised to remain quietly in his room for a few hours.

"That will do, John," said Wallace to the servant; "that will do. I'll have no more to-day. I've made a meal like a huntsman; and now, away with all these things. Let no one interrupt me for half an hour. John, if any one calls for Mr. Root while he is with me, say he is engaged. He must not be disturbed." John disappeared with the last tray, and Wallace was left alone to his reflections. "He can't have this girl," soliloquized Wallace. "A fortune like hers is worth watching. I'd rather have the old major successful than Everett; there would be some hope of *his* dying soon. She does not care for me; but who knows what time might do, if I can keep this Yankee out of her way. It shall not be my fault if I fail." A knock at the door.

"Come in, friend, come in," said Wallace in a soft

tone. Wallace always spoke in a soft, low tone. "Here, take this chair near me. Look out, you'll pull my watch down. There, now." Everett seated himself near the bed, and in doing so felt a chill of repugnance creep over him, which he found it difficult to conceal.

"You desired to see me," said Everett; "have you any special business? I must not absent myself from the drawing-room this evening. It would be a poor compliment to the ladies to be absent the last evening at Hollygrove. You will excuse me, Wallace, if I beg you to be brief."

Wallace looked at him with a feigned smile, and said in a sarcastic tone: "The ladies care little for you or me, Everett. Why should we deprive ourselves of a pleasant evening for their sakes? I have many subjects to speak upon. Is the door closed? Take a glass of wine. Don't refuse to take it. I know you declined at dinner. That will do well enough if you wish to impress Miss Staunton with an idea of your sanctity!" Everett declined.

"Have you noticed how that little black-eyed gypsy encourages the major?" asked Wallace; "and the old fool really thinks he is going to sail into sailor's snug harbor in his old age, and leave his name to future generations. But if I can help it he won't do it."

"What do you mean?" inquired Everett, in a grave tone.

"Mean! I mean that Mary Staunton loves Major Trevalyan, and that neither you nor I can win the girl, unless he is put out of her way. These young girls are sure to be caught by a uniform, no matter how long worn."

"I do not know," said Everett, "that it is any

business of ours, Wallace, who Mary Staunton will marry. It is not three weeks since you told me that Walter and she would make a match."

"Walter tried to blind me with that idea, in order to keep me off the track," replied Wallace. "I'll tell you more," (I ought not to tell it.) "He told me that before he ever saw the girl, you seemed half-crazed in love with her. For my part I can see very little that is attractive about her, except her fortune. I would not object to that myself."

Everett's brow contracted. "But," continued Humphrey, "neither Walter, nor you, nor I, will have the felicity of being Miss Staunton's banker. The old major has accepted an offer from her. What do you think of that?" Everett's countenance changed. The blood rose to his face. The idea that Mary's preference for the old gentleman was any thing more than that respect and reverential attachment which a very young person may feel for one thirty years her senior, had never been seriously entertained by him; although he had more than once joked Mary about her "young lover." That she would *offer herself* to him, he did not believe.

"Wallace Humphrey," said Everett, in an excited tone, "what authority have you for making such an assertion? Prove it, or I'll expose the falsehood."

"I have only the authority of her own lips," replied Wallace. "I heard her tell the major that she loved him"—he paused. Everett was listening with his lips compressed, and his eyes fixed upon Wallace.—"Go on," said Everett.—"I saw her fall upon his neck and cover his face with kisses. Now do you doubt my prophecy?" said Wallace, bursting into a sardonic

laugh. Everett started from his chair and in a transport of indignation exclaimed:

"You lie! As you are a living man, Wallace Humphrey, you shall answer for this base falsehood, if you cannot prove it."

"Ha! ha! ha! I like to see young blood boil," replied Wallace, laying his long lank arms upon the bed upon which he was stretched, and rubbing his hands violently together. "Ha! ha! ha!"

"She is not worthy of your chivalric zeal in her defence, good Everett. You cannot wear gold buttons and a wig! There is no chance for you, nor for me, until we can cripple that manœuvring old soldier!"

"What authority have you for insinuating that I have thoughts of Miss Staunton, except as a friend?" said Everett. "The peculiar circumstances of her life must excite the interest of every high-minded man, who becomes acquainted with her; and the generosity and candor of her disposition inspire respect. But why you have presumed so far as to suppose that I wish to gain Miss Staunton's hand is more than I can understand, and more than I will permit."

"Bah! Everett; that is high-sounding nonsense. You know as well as I do, that a girl possessed of a million of solid charms is likely to be an object of interest to every young man to whom she is introduced. There is no necessity for personal attractions under such circumstances. I do not pretend to deny *my* desire to be the accepted of Miss Staunton, nor will it be my fault if I am refused; but I fear we have no chance, Everett. She made a confession of her life to the old major this morning. I heard it unwillingly. I was awkwardly situated, but could not let them know that I was near enough to hear their conversation, with-

out injustice to myself. I had taken a seat high in the branching arm-chair of the old oak tree, near the fountain, to take a sketch of Hollygrove for my portfolio. The air was fine and I remained a long time admiring the beautiful landscape. Falling into a reverie I fell asleep, and was awakened by voices under the tree. I discovered that the old major and his little lady were in a conversation tête-à-tête. I could not move, for I had heard too much. What I heard I am too honorable to repeat; but as your friend I can tell you that there is no hope for you."

"You were a villain, Wallace Humphrey, to listen, and a hypocrite to call yourself my friend. You say you heard Miss Staunton offer herself to Major Trevalyan, and he accepted her offer, and you heard a confession of her life?"

"*I do* say so. I forgive your wrath, Everett. I forgive you, poor fellow; call me a liar, call me a hypocrite. I wish I were both in this instance. You will live to thank me for the information and ask my pardon for insulting me."

Everett walked to the window. Night had thrown her dark mantle over the beautiful lawn, and its gloom seemed grateful to his troubled spirit.

He thought of Mary's childhood, so cold and desolate, of her father's sorrow when he met her at Marvel Hall, of his unwearied patience and loving care of her, of his own surprise when he first met her at Hollygrove, and found her so much and so agreeably changed, of the interest he had found daily increasing in his heart and soul for her, when he witnessed the candor of her character, her generosity, and her humility more attractive than either. He had seen the goodness of her heart called forth, and developed by the happy influences

that surrounded her at Hollygrove, and, "could it be possible," he thought, "that she could have been so far forgetful of propriety, and so lost to feminine delicacy as to give her heart, unasked, to Major Trevalyan?" These thoughts passed rapidly through his mind, and occupied but an instant of time. Everett turned suddenly to Wallace.

"I may have been too hasty, Mr. Humphrey. I cannot believe that one whom I respect so much can be guilty of the folly you supposed you witnessed. If Mary Staunton *loves* Major Trevalyan I can then—" Everett could go no further.

"Come, come, cheer up," said Wallace. "There are as good fish yet in the sea as ever were caught. You are going to London with her. There you have the advantage. I would go myself, but I cannot just now; however, I can keep the major quiet here. I'll intercept his billet-doux if he attempts sending any. Bribes to the servants can do that business. You know how easy it is to get up a jealous feeling in a young heart. He will not write, and she will show proper resentment. Ha! ha! ha! ha!" Wallace rubbed his thin hands briskly together, and winked encouragingly at Everett.

CHAPTER XX.

The gentlemen left the dinner-table that day earlier than usual, and joined the ladies in the drawing-room. Walter and Miss Ellsmere looked over the music to select some favorite pieces, at the same time talking in an under-tone. Mr. Staunton and Mrs. Meredith gravely discussed plans for the future, and Gertrude appeared to be reading the book of poems she held in her hand; but her thoughts were far from it, as might have been conjectured from the expression of her face.

"Will you take Mary to India with you?" inquired Mrs. Meredith.

"I cannot," said Mr. Staunton. "The present state of affairs, I find, threatens trouble in that quarter; I would relinquish my claims sooner than expose her to any danger. I may be able to arrange matters so as to permit me to remain in London. I am anxious to give Mary opportunity for improvement, and enable her to retrieve, if possible, the time lost. She has many qualities of mind and heart, which, if properly directed, will make her all I have ever desired her to be—*a good woman, and a useful member of society.* In this wish is comprised all that can be attractive or desirable—a faithful wife, a fond and conscientious mother, a firm friend, and an affectionate daughter. My poor Mary has much to learn and acquire to come up to my standard; but I do not despair."

"It is of vital importance to know the character and disposition of those to whom you intrust her in London," said Mrs. Meredith. "A large city has many temptations."

"They are everywhere, dear sister. I have lived long enough to learn that they are not confined to time or place. My intention is to consult our dear friend, Lady Howard, and ask her to become a guardian to my child during my stay in London. Mary's large fortune will doubtless subject her to the annoyance of heartless attention from unprincipled money-seekers. This cannot be avoided. I am at a loss to know how to act. To warn her against them may not be advisable."

"I wish that one of your own choice could be found," said Mrs. Meredith, "who would win her affections while her heart is free. This would save her from the dangers you fear."

Mr. Staunton was silent a few moments, and then replied: "There is one to whom I could make no objection; but I may be mistaken in supposing that he is interested in Mary. I mean Everett Root."

"I think," said Mrs. Meredith, "Mary's diffidence has prevented her from encouraging his attention. I have noticed she avoids him lately."

"His goodness and manly beauty might win any heart, it seems to me," observed Mr. Staunton.

"Do you not know, brother, there is nothing so wayward as the heart of woman?" said Mrs. Meredith, smiling.

"Where is Mary?" inquired Mr. Staunton; "it is nearly two hours since she left the parlor."

Mrs. Meredith ordered the servant to say to Miss Staunton, that her father desired to see her in the parlor. Mary soon entered. Her sad countenance at-

tracted the attention of every one present. Wallace followed her hobbling upon one foot, supported by the good old major, who had gone to his room to see him soon after Everett left, and offered to help him to the drawing-room, assuring him that the pleasant society of the ladies that evening would do more to cure him than all the lotions he could use. The major and Mary had promised to keep the manner of his fall a secret, in order to save him from the teasing it would cost him, he solemnly assuring them that he had not heard a word of their conversation.

"I found this poor fellow a lonely captive," said the major, with one of his good-natured smiles. "I have released him, and now who will pay the ransom?"

"What is it?" inquired the ladies. "A merry song," said the major, remarking Mary's sad face, and wishing to divert her thoughts.

"*I* will," said Mary, going to the piano with feigned gayety of manner. Running her fingers over the keys gracefully, she drew a sigh and then sung a merry Swiss carol, repeating the joyous chorus several times which she had heard re-echoed from many a hill. Everett came in at the end of the song amid the loud applause with which she was received when she rose from the piano. The major held out his hands to Mary, and, placing her arm in his, seated her near her father, intimating by a look how much happiness that father must enjoy.

"I am rewarded, amply rewarded," said the major. "Let the captive speak for himself."

In an instant Humphrey was on one knee before Mary, gracefully craving the privilege of serving her with his life if need be.

This little gallantry over, a silence ensued. Ever

ett was discontented. Jealous and angry thoughts were gathering a heavy cloud upon his brow. "This must not be," said the major. "The last evening we spend with our good friend and his daughter must be *all smiles*, not tears. Come Mr. Root, make yourself agreeable to the prettiest lady in the room and let us have a dance."

"That is malicious, Major," said Gertrude. "You know Mr. Root will be too gallant to make a choice. You must have wished to leave him alone in that dark corner he has chosen."

"Let him make himself agreeable to the ugliest young lady in the room," said Mary, running to the vacant chair near Everett, and seating herself in it. She blushed and became embarrassed. "I am wild and thoughtless. It is my nature, and no one will be surprised at any thing I will do," thought the giddy girl, whose confusion was a cause of merriment to the ladies. To Everett her manner was inexplicable; and he was not in a humor to be amused by it. He replied only by a look of annoyance and surprise.

"I see," said Mary, "you are either unwilling to acknowledge me the ugliest lady in the room, for which I am your humble servant, or you prefer being disagreeable to-night, Mr. Root; now I request the pleasure of dancing with you." Mary presented her hand and bowed low before him in mock deference and gravity. He smiled reluctantly and took his place upon the floor amid cheers and laughter. Mrs. Meredith desired the old blind harper and his little grandson to play. Walter begged the pleasure of Gertrude's hand; and Wallace, who was with difficulty able to walk, led Miss Ellsmere to a place in the quadrille.

"Here is your place, aunt," said Walter, pointing

to the head of the quadrille which had been reserved. "Come, brother, we must not refuse to do our part to make the remembrance of this night a pleasant one," said Mrs. Meredith.

"Major," said Mary, "we cannot allow you to be left out."

"I'll give the major my place, if you desire it, Miss Staunton," whispered Everett.

"I do *not* desire to give *any one* your place, Everett," replied Mary with emphasis; "please give up your ill-humor now at once, or I'll be cross too."

The major thanked Mary, and assured her that it made him happier to look on; adding in a softened tone of voice: "It is all I can do now, Mary. The time has been when I could take my part. My heart is yet young enough to do so, but—these tired limbs —the old man is weary now." The major leaned back in his chair, and watched the graceful movements of the merry dancers, (whose smiling faces hid from the observer anxious thoughts and cares,) while prophetic visions rose before his mind, which called forth a deep sigh from the old soldier's heart. Greatly interested in Mary, and knowing what a mine of wealth lay buried beneath the surface of that light-hearted, giddy, ever-changing, undisciplined character, he loved her as a father loves a daughter, and as the aged love the young. "She will leave us to-morrow," he thought. "May God protect her! the dear child!"

"Smiles, not tears, to-night," said Mary, laughing and throwing her fan in the major's lap to attract his attention, as she passed him rapidly in the dance, for she saw he nad fallen into a reverie, and that his eyes were filled with tears. He started, and with pleasant gallantry put the fan to his lips and bowed. No one

could have known, so gay was her manner, how deeply Mary felt that night.

The dance was a merry one, at least it so appeared; and upon each one it produced a peculiar influence. With Mrs. Meredith and her brother, it was a light that gleamed upon the memories of the past, and brought again to life beloved departed ones.

"Do you not remark, brother," said Mrs. Meredith, "that Mary is becoming like her dear mother?"

"I have remarked it since she came here," said Mr. Staunton. "She has grown more thoughtful; there seems to have been an awakening of her *soul*. I cannot express my idea in any other words. A consciousness of the responsibilities of existence which should have been taught her from her infancy, so that it might have grown with her years, and strengthened with her strength. I found her so perfectly uninstructed that I feared to force a growth by transplanting her too soon to this genial soil, running the risk of a premature death; and I therefore travelled with her two years before coming home to you, dear sister. I regret that I must leave so soon. It would be a great advantage for the child to remain with you."

"Why not leave her?" inquired Mrs. Meredith.

"I was so long parted from her," replied Mr. Staunton, "that unless a great necessity arises for it, I have decided that we shall never be separated until she is married. If she should not marry, how happy my home will be with her."

"You will not go to India then, if you can find some person to whom you can intrust your business there," said Mrs. Meredith.

"That is my present intention, but man proposes, and God disposes," replied Mr. Staunton.

Walter and Gertrude during this time were carrying on what young people call a flirtation, while Miss Ellsmere and Wallace were discussing science and metaphysics. Miss Ellsmere was a book-worm, who buried herself in the musty leaves of the library, and was seldom drawn into the light of the outer world, but lived, as Gertrude declared, "*behind her eyes*," little good to any one except herself, and that little, doubtful.

"Forward, Everett, to Aunt Edith," said Mary; "you seem wofully absent-minded. I ought, in pity, to change places with Gertrude and raise your spirits, or with Miss Ellsmere. She will awaken you with one of her electric shocks. Do you know, she frightens me to death? She is sure, if I am near her, to talk of the influence of the moon and planets upon the earth, and ask me some absurd question about it, or give a discourse upon the lost arts, or the wonders of antiquity. One day she caught me in the library. I was taking down the history of England and a volume of the English poets from the shelf, when some one laid a cold finger upon my arm. I started as if a ghost had appeared. She might as well be a ghost for all the benefit she is to the living—(go, gentlemen, chasse.")

"I never saw you so animated, Cousin Mary," whispered Walter, as he passed her.

"Indeed! that is strange," said Mary, "for I was talking of a ghost to a ghost. Does not Everett look ghost-like to-night?"

"Well, Everett, I was saying," continued Mary, "Miss Ellsmere touched my arm. I screamed, and let the books fall! She smiled and apologized; and then said that I must sit by her and tell her all I had

seen in my travels. Only think of the request! for I assure you it is all like a dream to me. Well, there was no escape from her. She started with me in London, and we went from there to Paris. I made the most out-of-the-way answers, I know, for what I could not remember, I guessed at, and went on talking until I saw a smile on her lip. I knew she was amused, so I laughed loudly. 'I've been making the greatest fool of you possible,' said I; and ran away with my books to my room as fastas I could go! Another day (attend, Everett, go forward)—another day, she showed me a picture of Niagara Falls, and asked me what I thought of its merits, and whether it would give a person a correct idea of the Falls. Now, I am sure she did it to puzzle me, and hear my false ideas of the fine points in the picture. I had never seen the Falls, and for aught I knew, it might be the best or the worst representation. I thought but a moment, well puzzled, I assure you, and then said, 'It is very good, but it is nothing without the roar!'" Everett smiled, and Mary continued: "I dislike that girl with all my heart—she is so fond of drawing out a person's deficiencies in order to show off her better knowledge of things. I confess I am very, very ignorant; but I mean to study very hard the next two years, and I'll try to know a little more than I do now, at the end of that time. I hope I'll know enough to make myself agreeable. Look at Major Trevalyan. Who knows more than he does? and he is as simple as a child. No one would suppose he thought me foolish at all, and yet I know he does."

"Quite the contrary, I imagine," said Everett.

"Don't jest upon painful subjects, Mr. Root," said Mary, the color rising to her forehead. "*You* know that I am fully aware of my ignorance, and that

I am also aware that you *know* it. It is ungenerous to mortify me. I thought you more kind."

"I assure you if I were permitted to express my opinion of you, Mary, you would not blush to hear it."

"Look at that dear kind old gentleman," said Mary, glancing towards the major. "I can never forget him, I can never thank him as my heart desires, for the care he has taken to instruct me, and to lighten the mortifications I have endured since I came here. How sad he looks. I'll throw my fan in his lap when we pass him in the grand chain."

"She is always thinking of the major," thought Everett. "It may be that Wallace is right. If so, it is folly for me to think any more of her."

This last thought caused Everett a sigh, which Mary heard and thought she understood. He could not himself account for the power with which the fascination of that singular girl enchained him. Since the day he first saw her she had interested him. It might be from the sympathy her position excited, and it might be the total indifference she manifested towards him.

"The heart of man is as inexplicable as woman's is fickle," said Gertrude, addressing Walter. "If I wished to win your heart, Mr. Meredith, I'd slight you on all occasions, only throwing out an occasional crumb of comfort. Depend upon it, that is the way to treat you Lords of Creation."

"Then I must judge, Miss Gertrude Ellsmere, that you are indifferent to me, since I must confess I cannot complain of any want of attention from you."

"Your vanity makes you contented with small favors," said Gertrude. "What can have happened tonight to make Everett so grave?"

"No doubt regret at leaving Hollygrove. It will cost him some pain. He goes to London soon, and then home to America." Gertrude sighed.

The dance was ended. The harper played "Auld Lang Syne" with variations, and after it a soft Bohemian air, while refreshments were brought in.

Mary whispered to her father, and he drew from his pocket a small package, which he gave her. It contained some valuable mementos of battles fought and won in the time of Major Trevalyan's service, and some valuable letters written by the major's brother-officers to Mr. Staunton's father. Mr. Staunton had taken them from his collection for Mary, that she might present them as a parting gift to the major. With the package was a miniature of Mary, taken when she was three years old. "What is this?" said Mary, laughing. "The major would not prize this baby. Who is she?"

"It is your miniature," said her father. "It was taken when you were three years old, by one of the best Italian artists in New York, shortly before your dear mother died. I left it with your Aunt Edith when I came to England."

"Was I really the handsome child I see here?" said Mary. The major asked to look at the likeness, and Everett and Walter and Wallace crowded around also to see the picture, but only one dared to ask for it.

"Have you a copy?" inquired the major.

"I have not," said Mr. Staunton.

"Oh give it to the major, father, if he would really like it," said Mary, as innocent of the pain she gave Everett as she was earnest in her manner.

Mr. Staunton offered the miniature, which was grace-

fully declined. Mary presented him the package she held in her hand, upon which she had written her name in pencilling.

The major received it with the polite remark, "It is doubly valuable for the friendship that accompanies the gift," and he added a pretty and appropriate speech, the warm manner of which showed that it came directly from the old soldier's heart, and caused Mary more emotion than she would have willingly shown could she have read Everett's thoughts at that moment as he stood watching every change in her countenance while the major was speaking. Mrs. Meredith desired the old harper to conclude the music of the evening with the sweet air of "The Meeting of the Waters." He did so, and when withdrawing, wished "that the young mistress might soon come back to Hollygrove." Mary followed him to the hall, and put a gold piece in his hand, and gave another to the young boy, making their hearts glad for many days. The poor old blind man dropped upon his knee before her, and raising his sightless eyes to heaven moved his lips in prayer. A strange sensation thrilled through the young girl's veins. A mysterious awe filled her breast, which she could not explain. Was it holy ground? Had the prayer of that humble and faithful man called angels from another world who were near her? A mysterious longing, a something, a shadow of faith which she could not define or account for, was stealing over her. Was it hope? or fear? May there not have been angels near, the hem of whose heavenly garments she touched? The company in the drawing-room soon dispersed, and Mary went to her room. Its appearance was by no means calculated to raise her spirits. The faithful Mag had taken down her dresses from the wardrobe

and packed her trunks, which were standing in the middle of the room. Scraps of papers found in Miss Mary's bureau, the careful maid had left loosely upon the table. They might, she thought, be of consequence, and she was sure they must be, for some were written on rose-colored paper. She had been waiting a long time, and had fallen into a heavy sleep in a chair when Mary entered.

Scarcely conscious of what she was doing, Mary walked to the window and looked out upon the lawn on which the moon was shining mildly. Nature at the moment seemed calm and peaceful as the dream of an infant. Leaning her head against the window pane, she watched the majestic moon in the heavens, that moved on, on, through the clear sky. Now it is veiled by a fleecy cloud, and now it shines brightly upon the waters of the fountain, sprinkling its surface with sparkling diamonds. "It is a lovely night," thought Mary, "and the last I can spend at Hollygrove. Forever? oh, no, not forever. Dear Hollygrove, what lessons you have taught me." The conversation, the walk with the major on that morning; her confession; his surprise; his goodness; her gratitude; was she too thoughtless? her fear that he could no longer esteem her; her hope of going to Florence; her resolution to atone for the wrong she had inflicted upon Alice; the conversation with Everett—could she ever be worthy of his esteem? It would be impossible for him, she thought, to love her; she would conceal her jealousy of Gertrude, and he should never know that she loved him; the merry song she had sung, while her heart was very, very sad; the dance, the gift to the major—his acceptance—the aged blind man's prayer—these all passed through her mind. One by one the little

stars faded from her sight, and objects became indistinct. How long she would have remained in this dreamy state she could not tell. Mrs. Meredith saw the light still shining in her room, and came to inquire the cause. Mary screamed and started when the door opened, and she saw a figure approaching her.

"What is the matter, my dear?" asked Mrs. Meredith alarmed.

"Oh forgive me, Aunt Edith, for screaming. I came to the window to look at dear Hollygrove by moonlight, and began to think of every thing that had passed to-day. I fell into the deepest kind of a reverie, I suppose, for when you opened the door I didn't know where I was! I do not think I could have been really awake, for I remember when you came towards me, I thought you were a ghost, and I screamed."

Mag rubbed her eyes. She too had been in the land of dreams; and before she became fully conscious that she was in the presence of her old and young mistress, she stretched her arms above her head and yawned aloud. A word from Mrs. Meredith brought her to her senses, and in the most humble manner she apologized for being so unnatural as to fall asleep!

Mrs. Meredith, who was not a stranger to the little troubles of Mary's heart, with one arm around her drew her closely to her side, and kissed her affectionately. There was so much meaning in the pressure of dear Aunt Edith's hand, that Mary felt conscious her unhappiness had excited her sympathy. "Am I not a foolish, silly girl, dear Aunt? But I am sure *you* can forgive me for feeling lonely and dispirited. I am very, very sorry to leave you, and this dear spot, and kind Major Trevalyan." Mrs. Meredith remained some time with Mary, talking of the pleasure which

her visit had afforded; and took the opportunity to speak much in praise of Everett.

The dim light in the room, and the shadow of the window drapery which fell upon Mary's face, concealed the deep color produced by the sound of his name. Mrs. Meredith begged Mary to retire and endeavor to sleep. Mary promised and meant to do so; but it was far into the night before she slept, and then not quietly. Coiled serpents darted out upon her from beds of moss and roses, and fastened upon her so tightly that no effort she could make would shake them off. Then the old blind man came and saved her from them.

CHAPTER XXI.

Hollygrove was one of the loveliest spots that can be pictured. Nature there was adorned in her most beautiful attire, and art had tried, but in vain, to rival her beauty. Upon the lawn, in front of the time-honored mansion, were clusters of aged trees and flowers in profusion, of the rarest beauty. Fountains were sparkling in beautiful basins, throwing up their crystal jets, which the sun's rays tipped with gold and purple, before they flowed in soft and bubbling waters deep into the earth, where they awakened soft music in her caverns of hidden treasures.

The last days of Autumn deepened the shades of the foliage, adding beauty to the picturesque country that surrounded Hollygrove, and its influences made their impression upon Mary. When she arose the morning of her departure for London, she stood some time by the window of her room and looked out upon the lovely landscape before her; her heart yearned for higher aims and impulses, which life in this lovely spot seemed to offer. Never had nature looked so beautiful to her. Each flower and leaf and sunbeam spoke eloquently to her. It might be that she was bidding adieu to Hollygrove forever, and why linger to love still better what it was pain to her now to part with. Mary turned from the window, and went to the parlor,

where she found the family had gathered around the breakfast table. Soon a carriage was waiting before the Hall door, and the impatient horses were pawing the ground and tossing their proud heads in the air. A servant who held a bouquet of flowers in his hand, was near the carriage door, which stood open. Mr. Humphrey had presented the flowers to Mary that morning, and she had left them intentionally in the library, but Wallace, piqued by the indifference that had left them there, had ordered the servant to hand them to her when she entered the carriage. Mary had said good-bye to Aunt Edith, but Mr. Staunton and Mrs. Meredith were lingering in the hall with their hands still clasped. "The pleasure of your visit, is told in the pain of our parting, my dear brother," said Mrs. Meredith.

Everett seemed scarcely to hear the regrets which Mary expressed to him. He now stood by her side pale and silent, and hoped she had not remarked his trembling voice and sad "good-bye!" He had been with Wallace that morning, and had, he thought, heard convincing proof that Mary was engaged to Major Trevelyan. Mary took a card from her pocket-book, and wrote Lady Howard's address upon it, and handed it to Everett, saying: "I hope you will come very soon to London. I shall expect to see you as soon as you arrive." Then turning hastily to the major, who was leaning against a pillar that supported the porch, she extended her hand to him. "If I am worthy of a thought forget my faults, and sometimes think of your child-friend," she said in a stifled voice. The old man's heart would have prompted him to tell her how much it pained him to part with her, and how much he loved her; but he knew that it would not be wise to do so.

He held her hand, and in a scarcely audible voice replied:

"May God bless you, and guide you, Mary. We may never meet again. Sometimes look back upon the days you have passed with your old friend, and remember him kindly. Good-bye, child, good-bye."

Mary could not reply, but covered her face with her veil, and took her place in the carriage by her father's side. When a turn in the avenue brought them again in front of the mansion, she saw the old soldier pacing the portico, his arms were crossed behind him, and his head was bent low and resting upon his chest. Mrs. Meredith turned from the door before they had left the avenue, and went to her room, where she remained alone several hours. Walter and Gertrude talked sentimentally of the pain of parting, and the joy of a re-union. Wallace strolled off to Oakwood cottage, to make love to the gardener's pretty daughter. Everett remained by the window that looked out upon the road, so long as the carriage could be seen. He still loved Mary. What would his mother think of it? What would Hal think? How he had laughed at Hal's enthusiasm for Mr. Staunton's young daughter, which was cured (he was glad to think) by the first visit to —— hotel. How changed Mary had become since then, and what improvement might not yet be anticipated. How happy would he be, could he introduce her to society as his wife. But the major! Why did he love a girl who *could* be the major's bride? Where was his manliness? Away with this castle-building, only fit for girls in their teens. But did she not say in the dance, she would not give his (Everett's) place to *any one*. Yes, he remembered distinctly she said it with earnestness, and, why should he not believe,

with sincerity. When the major said "good-bye!" she wept. "I must not care for one so much interested in another," he continued, soliloquizing. "Will not I regret this folly? Is it her wealth I seek? No, I spurn the thought!"

How long Everett would have remained looking upon the road is uncertain, had not Walter disturbed his reverie by a slap on his shoulder, which he playfully remarked, he should not forget to return.

"Old chum, what mischief are you concocting?" said Walter. "Nothing more dangerous," replied Everett, "than wishing I could have made myself more agreeable than I have been able to do at Hollygrove. Really, Walter, my visit with you has been a delightful one."

CHAPTER XXII.

Mr. Staunton endeavored to cheer Mary by directing her attention to the beautiful scenery through which they were passing on the way to London, and was agreeably surprised to find that her taste and appreciation of nature had been so much improved. She pointed out many beauties to her father which attracted her; and made many inquiries respecting things in which before now he supposed her wholly uninterested. Some legend or historical fact could be told of almost every hill and tower. The ivy-clad ruins of the old castles brought to her mind the history she had heard from the major, of the desperate and chivalric battles of the feudal times. "How beautiful!" Mary exclaimed, at every change of scenery, until the smoke of the city shadowed the sky, and the harsh sound of the pavement under the carriage wheels soon gave warning that they had reached London.

They were now in one of the great thoroughfares of the city. A dense crowd of human beings were hurrying to and fro; some eagerly intent upon the duties of their calling; some hastening on to ruin; thousands pale and careworn, and many dejected almost to utter despair; while a few went cheerfully on, their hopes soaring and resting above the things of this earth. The carriage drove slowly through the crowded

street until it reached a large and beautiful square. It was evening. The driver stopped in front of a fine and imposing dwelling. Mary and her father alighted from the carriage. The door was opened by a servant in rich livery, and the expected guests were in a few moments hospitably welcomed by Lady Howard and her daughter; Sir John Howard and his eldest son being then absent on the continent.

Mary saw in a glance that Lady Howard was surrounded by all the luxury that wealth could give; and that she took pride in the display and pomp of life. Every thing in the house and its arrangements showed this, and formed a strong contrast to the comfort that was consulted in all the elegancies of Aunt Edith's home. It was several days before Mary could feel happy with her father's friends, although Lady Howard kindly endeavored to remove the reserve with which Mary treated her.

Recollections of Hollygrove could not be effaced by the *brilliant* scenes of gayety offered to the unsophisticated American girl by her fashionable friends. In the circle to which Mary was introduced were distinguished men and women of every country, statesmen, handsome poets, and titled warriors. But with all its attractions, and they were many, London failed to interest her. During the first two or three weeks she was, as she acknowledged to her father, and which her friends did not deny, "stupid and disagreeable."

Letters came to her from Hollygrove, from Aunt Edith, full of affection, and from the major, filled with kind remembrances of her, and with amusing anecdotes of those she had left behind to regret her absence. But not a word from Everett. Where could he be? Why had he not kept his promise to come soon? It must

be that Gertrude had induced him to remain longer at Hollygrove.

Three weeks had passed and still no tidings of him. Mary at length grew indignant, and became, as her friends thought, the gayest of the circle of the young who nightly surrounded her. The timidity and reserve of manner removed, her nonchalant, reckless vivacity, was regarded as an American characteristic, quite novel and entertaining, and the society of the young stranger was much sought.

It was with surprise and pleasure that Mr. Staunton saw Mary so much admired. Lady Howard, whose own beautiful daughters were now rather thrown in the shade by this unpretending American, was sure that the secret of her power lay in the story that had gone abroad of her being an heiress of great expectations.

Mr. Canfield, a young man with light hair and blue eyes, had become desperately enamored at first sight, and so far seemed the most favored on the list of lovers. So Lady Howard in confidence told Mrs. Worthington, and Mrs. Worthington had whispered it in confidence to Mrs. O'Dash, whose son had amused every one by his excessive attentions, which Mary received with marked indifference.

Each day brought with it new scenes of pleasure, which from their novelty attracted without really interesting the young novice in fashionable life. Her want of enthusiasm, when shown the wonders of the great metropolis, was attributed to her American temperament, which Lady Howard remarked to a friend, partook of the nature of the aborigines of the New World! She fancied she could find a strong resemblance between Mary and the face of the beautiful Pocahontas, whose portrait hung in her picture gallery.

Mr. Staunton accompanied his daughter in her visits to public places of interest during the day, and spent hours with her in examining and studying works of art; and frequently joined their parties of pleasure in the evening.

But very soon it seemed surprising to him how this routine of fashionable life could fail to become wearisome even to the young.

He had expected that Mary would, for a time, enter into the pleasures of a London winter with all the ardor of her character, and no one could offer more brilliant opportunities for a gay season than Lady Howard. Mr. Staunton knew this, but was disappointed to find that Lady Howard was entirely devoted to the world. She confessed to him one day that she would sooner die, than live after society had lost its charm for her, or when she could no longer shine in its gay, fashionable circles.

Sir John Howard, Mr. Staunton's old and esteemed friend, was a man of different tastes and aspirations, and devoted his time so closely to the study of political economy, that he almost wholly secluded himself from his family and the society around them, an extreme which if not as injurious as that in which Lady Howard indulged, was but ill calculated to develop the kindlier and better qualities of Sir John's own nature. He had urged Mr. Staunton to allow Mary a winter with his daughters in London, assuring him that Lady Howard had become remarkable for her happy faculty of bringing young ladies successfully into society.

An American actress was at this time creating a sensation in the fashionable world of London, by her great beauty, and the high position which it was said she occupied before appearing upon the stage. Several

noblemen it was said had become half frantic with disappointed love; for, despite of all their efforts, she rejected every overture and refused to see them.

It was whispered that she had a jealous lover, to whom she was devoted, and that he required her to go closely veiled in order that none could see her, except in her brilliant performances. Her acting was fascinating in the extreme from its rare naturalness. The intensity of her feeling in some impassioned scenes communicated itself like an electric fire to the audience, while in others, her childlike simplicity was, if possible, more captivating.

It was proposed by some gentlemen at Lady Howard's that a party should be formed to go to the play the first evening "this star" should appear again; which it was said would be very soon. Lady Howard's elder sister, who frequently matronized the young ladies when Lady Howard had other engagements, offered to accompany them. This arrangement was particularly agreeable to the younger members of the party, for the good old lady always dozed through the whole performance, and left them free to indulge in unchecked conversation.

On the proposed evening a merry company of ladies and gentlemen entered the theatre, and occupied Lady Howard's private box. The display of beauty and fashion on that night was seldom surpassed. The flood of light that radiated from diamonds on every side, was dazzling in the extreme. The glittering crowd, the music, the fairy drop-curtain, that pictured such landscapes as mortals never dwell in, the hum of pleasant voices, and the galaxy of bright eyes and smiles, gave a charm to the scene, which to the youthful imagination was almost heavenly. While Mary listened to the

beautiful and soul-stirring overture played by the orchestra, a thrill of undefined happiness quickened her pulse and gave her a brilliant color. Never had music seemed so enrapturing, and her heart responded to its tones.

"I had no idea you were so enthusiastic, Miss Staunton," said Mr. Canfield, leaning towards her, and whispering in her ear. "I've been looking in your face the last ten minutes, entranced by its animated and varied expression."

Mary blushed, and before she could reply some one touched her shoulder. Wallace Humphrey stood by her side. He grasped her hand familiarly, and expressed in a loud voice the delight this unexpected meeting gave him; and hoped Miss Staunton had not forgotten the happy hours they had passed together at Hollygrove. Annoyed by the ungentlemanly rudeness with which Mr. Humphrey had entered the box and monopolized the conversation with Miss Staunton, Mr. Canfield could not conceal his irritation. His glance was understood, and Wallace sneaked to the opposite side of the theatre, where he seated himself behind a column near Everett Root, and in a low whisper poured into his ear malicious scandal. The heart of the scandalmonger is like a stagnant pool sending to its surface a pestilential vapor, poisoning the happiness of all who breathe the air it taints.

"You see how easy it is for her to 'make love to the lips that are near,'" he simpered, in a sarcastic tone, giving a side glance at Everett, and smiling with pleasure at the pain his suggestions caused. "Scarce more than a month in London, and see with what familiar impudence that coxcomb by her side looks in her face. When I surprised them he held her hand in his, and

was whispering the most impassioned love in her ear."

The tinkling bell hushed the hum of voices; the curtain rose, and the audience eagerly awaited the appearance of the enchantress. The first scene represented a cottage home where a fond father and his dutiful daughter dwelt happy and contented; but one of noble birth came and lured her from that peaceful abode, with promises of wealth and fame befitting her grace and beauty.

"Is she not lovely?"—"How graceful"—"Queenly"—"Divine"—was heard on every side as the star of the evening entered. The applause with which the favorite was greeted, continued long. As she retired at the close of the scene she looked up and smiled upon the audience. Again the curtain rose, and now within the walls of a palace, where wealth and luxury lavished their gifts with wasteful profusion, and dazzled the eyes of every beholder, the lovely village maiden sat silent and alone, sad and sorrowing. Like the caged warbler, she longed for her native woods; and was bruised and weary from endeavoring to extricate herself from the prison whose gilded bars held her captive. The play progressed, carrying along with it the feelings of the excited audience. It was the wedding night of the unhappy girl. She had been dressed as a bride; and stood with her maids, herself the fairest, awaiting the groom, whose delay had flushed every cheek but hers with fear and disappointment, lest the nuptials should be delayed. At length he came and led her to the altar, where the priest received her, and gave a solemn admonition to the betrothed. But before the holy warning, "Whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder," had been pronounced, a shriek was heard

that pierced every heart, and the bride fell dead at the feet of her lover. At that moment the expression of her face attracted Mary, and for the first time she recognized, in the brilliant actress, Eva Ellory!

The curtain dropped upon the apparently lifeless form of the young creature, whose inimitable acting in this scene brought down deafening bravos and applause from the gentlemen, and screams and showers of tears from the ladies.

Mary started from her seat, clasped her hands, and leaned forward over the box, looking earnestly upon the stage after the curtain had fallen.

"It was Eva Ellory! The actress is Eva Ellory and not Clara Morland," exclaimed Mary. "She has changed her name. How dreadful, how agonizing was that shriek! It is still in my ear; she surely has died. Nothing but reality could have made her so deathlike."

"Pray, Miss Staunton, be calm," said Mr. Canfield, taking her hand and endeavoring to draw her back to her seat. Every one is remarking you; your simplicity is really refreshing. It was capital *acting*, I allow, but far from reality, I do assure you. The excitement of the occasion has increased your beauty; it is quite becoming."

"How very strange that Eva should have gone upon the stage. What would I not give to see her," said Mary, not heeding Mr. Canfield's remarks.

"See her!" exclaimed Ellen Howard, covering her face with her spangled fan. "You quite forget yourself, Miss Staunton, you surely would not visit an actress; and in the theatre."

"If she were an old friend I might. I am sure there was no acting in that last scene. Did she not look heart-broken?"

"Quite refreshing," repeated Mr. Canfield. "Tears too! Pray spare them for lovers whose hearts you will break. Who is Eva Ellory, may I ask?"

"An old pupil of Marvel Hall. You have often heard me speak of Marvel Hall—a great belle, a—" there Mary paused.

The audience were becoming impatient. A longer time than usual had intervened between the scenes. The orchestra tried to beguile the time, but was hissed and ceased to play.

The manager at length appeard before the curtain, and begged their kind consideration for their favorite. She had fainted from intensity of feeling, and was very ill. Another play equally attractive would be substituted if she continued too ill to resume her part. He bowed obsequiously at the end of his speech, and retired amid loud cheers interrupted by an occasional groan which only increased the applause tenfold.

"I knew she was ill! I must and will go to see her! She may die!" cried Mary, in an excited and resolute tone.

"Quite impossible!"

"Absurd!"

"What impropriety!"

was said in a breath by the ladies of the party, who shook their heads and turned up their eyes in horror; which we must confess was quite excusable; for the excitement of the moment alone would have led Mary, impulsive though she was, to brave public opinion so far as to go behind the scenes of a theatre at such a time.

"*I must, I will* see her; she may die, and her family would never hear of her again!" said Mary.

"Remember your father's ideas of strict propriety,

and his objections to public characters," said Miss Howard.

"Really, Miss Staunton," said Mr. O'Dash, "you have not an ide-au of the scandal such a circumstance would create-au."

Mary gave him a glance of contempt, and throwing her opera cloak around her, arose, and said in an excited and determined tone, "I must go, and I beg of you, Mr. Canfield, to accompany me. Show me the way behind the scenes, for I MUST, I WILL see Eva Ellory to-night. You need come only to the door of the green-room, however, for I must see her alone." Mr. Canfield obeyed the command, and followed Mary, who left the young ladies of the party in a state of perplexed surprise and consternation at her determined will in persisting in what they considered unaccountable disregard for all propriety and self-respect.

Wallace, who had watched them with an opera glass, from the time the discussion commenced, left his seat when he saw Mary leave the box, and walked stealthily at a little distance behind them until she entered the green-room, and Mr. Canfield took his post near a gas-light in the hall, not far from the door.

"What do you say now?" said Wallace, when he had returned to Everett's side; "call me a liar, hey? a hypocrite, hey? What do you think of your Desdemona, now? I saw her enter that vile place to see—whom think you? No doubt that consummate villain with whose pretty face half the girls in London are in love. A good-looking rival, is he not? He! he! he!" laughed Wallace, rubbing his thin hands together, and entwining his bony fingers in restless glee, which the compressed lip and contracted brow of his companion excited. "I am a liar, a hypocrite, am I? He! he! he!"

Everett pressed his hand to his head a few moments, and then left the theatre without replying to the contemptible villain by his side.

The green-room was filled when Mary entered, with coarse, ugly-looking, worn-out, illy-painted women, who could not have been then recognized as the village maidens who had danced on the green in the distance.

They were gathered around Eva and gaping with idle curiosity into her deathlike face. Some indecently dressed young ballet dancers were promenading behind the scenes to keep their weary eyes open until their turn came to gratify the depraved tastes of the pleasure-seekers of the world. Sometimes they paused and thrust their heads within the door to catch a glance at the fine lady in white satin. Some brigand-looking men dressed in tawdry tinsel and velvet, with cap and plumes, and some half-starved subordinates in red woollen coats, stood in groups around the door.

Upon a soiled and ragged couch lay the beautiful Eva, in her bridal robes, and by her side stood a large red-featured masculine-looking woman, in a waiting-maid's attire, who was holding a tin cup of water in her hand, into which she thrust her thumb and finger and sprinkled her face, offering the same vessel to her lips, and encouraging her to take one sup.

"It *is* Mrs. Ellory!—Eva! Eva!" exclaimed Mary, pushing the woman aside, and rushing to the couch of the actress.

"Who is this?' muttered a diminutive, pock-marked man, in a gruff tone.

"Put her out, put her out," cried a half dozen sulky voices. "Where is the manager?"

"Eva!—Eva Ellory!" cried Mary, holding firmly to the couch from which they were roughly dragging her.

The actress slowly opened her eyes, looked around her, and pressed her hand to her temples; partly rose from the couch, and again fell back, whispering in an unnatural voice, "No! No! I did not marry him; and so help me, Heaven, I never will. I did not marry him, did I?"

"Eva Ellory!" cried Mary, in a supplicating tone, endeavoring to arouse her from her lethargy. "Eva Ellory!"

"Whose voice is that? Who calls me by *his* name?" asked Eva, starting from the couch, and looking earnestly at Mary. "Let me hear it again—speak again—call that blessed name again! Who is it? Where is he? Speak, speak! Call me 'EVA ELLORY,' call me again! Is it *he?* Do I see *him?*" she exclaimed, staring wildly at Mary.

"'Tis I, dear Eva; 'tis Mary Staunton. Do you not know me? Here, lie back upon the couch again. What brought you here, Eva? Look at me. I am your old friend, Mary Staunton. Do you not remember me, Eva? I knew you in New York."

"Hush! Hush!" said Eva, grasping Mary's hand, and drawing her closely to her. In a hoarse voice she whispered, "he'll hear us! Hush!" Turning to the attendants around her, she said, "let the play be discontinued; I cannot act to-night." With an almost supernatural calmness, she added, "I am too ill to appear in the next scene. Leave me alone, I beg of you, till I recover my strength. I do not need your assistance now. I am better, thank you."

When all but her own maid had left the room, she begged Mary most piteously to take her with her, wherever her home might be.

"I'll die here, if you leave me," she said; "I am

wretched, very, very wretched. We must fly, and quickly, or he'll overtake us, and then it will be too late to save me. Do not hesitate, I entreat you. Come with me to my carriage, and take me away, Mary, or I'm lost—forever lost. He will overcome me. I am yet innocent, and have withstood his threats and entreaties."

Her maid threw a large cloak around her, and implored Mary for the love of God to save her, "for indeed," she said, "she feared the lady would be nearly killed when her husband came back and found that she had disappointed the crowded house within."

Mary consented, and they passed through a private door, that led to a long, dirty, narrow, dingy, dimly lighted hall, which conducted them to the back entrance to the theatre, around which some men and boys had gathered to get a glance at the beautiful actress when she would pass out after the play was over. A close carriage was standing in the street, before which a man was walking to keep himself awake.

"You are early, madam," said the coachman, "the Count has not come yet. I heard him tell one of the club he'd remain with him till eleven, and it's not yet ten. Are you ill, madam?" he said, observing her closely.

"Have you a wife, Phil?" inquired Eva, pausing before the door of the carriage, and speaking rapidly in a low trembling voice.

"Yes, my lady, and a good one too, God bless her!"

"You love her, Phil?" Phil nodded his head, his eyes twinkling with the thought of *how much* he loved her. "If any one should coax her away from you, Phil, what would you do to the cruel one who would help the tyrant to hold her from coming back to you?"

"Wall, Wall! Wall!—I'd—I'd—I do believe I'd kill him. I—I—I would," said Phil, clenching his fist and frowning darkly.

"Phil, can I trust you?"

"You can, my lady, God knows you can."

"Well, take this young lady home, Phil, and never say I went with her. Then come back as fast as you can and take your stand *here* again, and wait for me till the Count comes. You are not to say you saw me come out from the theatre. You understand, do you, Phil? I am not *his* wife." Phil looked puzzled and hesitated.

"Phil, don't keep me a moment longer. Hasten, he is very cruel."

"Oh! Oh! Oh! I see the diabolical victim of the evil one. For the love of God don't lose a minute then, my lady. Who is that there?"

"Is he coming? Did you see him?" asked Eva, startled.

"No, my lady, no," replied Phil, drawing a long breath, evidently relieved. "Pray get into the carriage quickly, lady. It was only a watchman, thank God. It is not much would be left of poor Phil, if it had been his lordship."

Quickly Eva could not move, for it seemed to her that her will had lost its power, so slowly was she escaping from the dreaded tyrant, and so long did the time appear to her before they had lost sight of the theatre. Mr. Canfield, who had waited some time in the lobby, becoming impatient for Mary's return, learned from the maid in the green-room that the young lady had gone home, and that if he left immediately he would probably overtake her. Amazed at the intelligence, Mr. Canfield hastened to the box, and hurriedly related the unaccountable circumstance to the young

ladies, who decided that for their own sakes it would be advisable not to create any alarm, which would only make the circumstance public.

In a state of intense anxiety and excitement they left the theatre before it was announced that the play would be discontinued. On arriving at home they found Mary had not yet returned. Their surprise, however, almost overcame their joy when Mary soon entered accompanied by the actress who had to be supported while walking to the parlor, where she was laid upon a sofa. Mary saw anger and consternation in the face of Lady Howard, and begged her father to withdraw with her a moment to the library. Lady Howard followed them, and Mary described to them the discovery of her old friend upon the stage, her illness, and her appeal to her to save her. She saw from the gravity of Lady Howard's demeanor, how much she disapproved of her conduct; and she also saw that it did not please her father. He reproved her for disregarding the entreaties of her friends, and in an unusually stern voice inquired, "when may I expect you, Mary, to act with discretion?"

"Don't be angry with me, dear father," exclaimed Mary, throwing her arms around his neck. "Don't be angry, father, I could not refuse the poor creature. She begged so imploringly, and was so afraid of being pursued by her—"

Mary scarcely knew whom poor Eva feared, although her convictions were, that his "lordship," spoken of by the coachman, was no other than Count Von Wollonstadt.

"By Count Von Wollonstadt," continued Mary, "she begged in tones so heartbroken to go with me I could not refuse her; indeed I could not, dear father;

and pray do not be angry with me." Lady Howard replied, that an actress could not remain in her house, and therefore it would be advisable to seek another shelter for her at once. The world, she said, would not excuse her for harboring a public character who had left her husband.

"It seems cruel to turn the poor creature out," said Mr. Staunton, gravely, "but it is the price that must be paid for the violation of the laws of God and society. I cannot blame you, Lady Howard. This woman is not the wife of the villain with whom she left home."

"Oh, dreadful! If that be so she cannot stay here under any circumstances to-night. I could not harbor such an abandoned person. The character of my family is too precious. She must be taken elsewhere at once. Where can it be?"—Ringing the bell, Lady Howard inquired of the servant who answered it—"if he knew of any place where a woman who had left her husband could be admitted."

"The Magdalen asylum, kept by the sisters of the Good Shepherd, is not very distant," replied the man, bowing respectfully.

"It is their *duty* to take her," said Lady Howard, "for I remember I subscribed one pound to that Institution. It is not very far from here. Order the carriage at once and take her away."

Mary burst into tears, and begged permission to accompany her.

"Don't send her this dark night alone, dear father. Pray do not."

"I will accompany her, my child," said Mr. Staunton. "It would be improper for you to go out at this late hour. Prepare her for the change, my dear."

Mary returned to the parlor. Eva still lay upon

the sofa. She had drawn her cloak closely around her, and seemed half unconscious of what was passing. Ellen and Annette Howard were sitting near her, gazing with admiration upon the face of the beautiful creature, scarcely able to realize that she was the one whom the multitude had followed with loud acclamations of praise, spreading laurels in her way, while they little knew that at that moment, with all that worldly fame, she had "not where to lay her head."

"Do you feel better, Eva?" inquired Mary, leaning over her, and laying her hand soothingly upon her forehead. Eva looked in her face and smiled gratefully.

"Yes, Mary; thank you, I do. Can I retire, I feel very ill still."

Mary was silent. Eva's short but sad experience in the world had quickened her perceptions. She read in Mary's expression that she was not a welcome guest. Rising from the sofa, she stood erect, and folded her jewelled hands across her breast, in proud resentful dignity.

"Do they scorn me here, Mary?" she asked, in a clear calm voice, and then, in the twinkling of an eye, her changed expression showed that the overcharged heart gave way. Her head fell upon her breast, her hands relaxed their grasp, and scalding tears of remorse and shame, fell in large drops upon her dress, while not a muscle of her face was disturbed.

"There is no room for you here, Eva," said Mary, sinking upon the sofa, and covering her face with her hands.

"Not room for me! Well, be it so. *Not room for me.* No—room—for the leper," she whispered.

"It will be too late to gain admission to the House

of the Good Shepherd, if we delay, my child," said Mr. Staunton, much affected. Eva started at the name of the asylum and looked inquiringly from one to the other, repeating in the tone of one asleep,

"Where?—Where?—Mary!"

Mary avoiding a reply, fastened her cloak upon her shoulders. In silence Mr. Staunton supported Eva to the door, and entered the carriage which had been provided; and in silence they drove to the house of mercy. It was past the hour for admitting applicants, but hearing that the case was an urgent one, the kind mother receiving Eva said, "God bless you, my child, come in! In the name of God come in!"

Mr. Staunton after expressing his gratitude to the good sister, returned home. When he had gone, and the door was again bolted, Eva was conducted to her cell, a small room, whose furniture consisted of a single bed, two chairs, and a table. This little room was lighted by a window that looked out upon the garden of the Institution, and deserved a more appropriate name than the forbidding one given to it by ancient custom.

Sister Agatha stood a moment before Eva, and while assisting her to undress, examined her rich attire and sparkling jewels.

"Poor child, you did not find much happiness in the world you served *so well*," she whispered, while unclasping the diamonds upon her neck and arms, and removing the orange buds and veil from her head. "Do not weep so bitterly. To-morrow you must tell me all your trials, and let me help you to bear the burthen, and gather strength for better things. Raise your heart to our good Lord, whose arms are ever open to receive his children when they come to him. Thank him for his mercies to you this night; and ask his for-

giveness for having strayed so far away from his sweet fold. May his blessed mother intercede for you, poor child."

Eva could only weep. Vainly did the good sister endeavor to soothe her.

After Eva had retired, sister Agatha knelt before a crucifix which stood upon a table by her bedside, and repeating the words, "Lord I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof, say but the word and my soul shall be healed," she remained some time in deep meditation and prayer, and then arose. Finding that Eva was restless and excited, with tender sympathy she sat down by her bed and bathed the temples of the invalid until she slept.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MARY retired to her room, as soon as her father and Eva had left the house, and gave way to the sad feelings which the events of the night had excited in her generous heart. She recalled the life of pleasure and excitement with which the young belle had been ushered into society, and the bright hopes they promised to her for the future. She recalled the enthusiasm with which Eva used to talk to her of the glorious fame for which her heart sighed: "And to what," thought Mary, "has this led? To happiness? Oh no!" Conjectures respecting Eva's feelings on arriving at the asylum; her unhappiness with the Count; his anger when he would find her gone; the feelings of disappointment which Mary herself had experienced since her arrival in London—Everett's unkindness and neglect of her—resolutions to hide from him and the world her love for him—Aunt Edith—the Major—Maggie the maid—the marriage scene—the overture—Wallace Humphrey—floated before Mary's imagination, and were blended in fantastic confusion, and she fell asleep.

Lady Howard, incensed that any of her family should be connected with so disgraceful an affair, desired, on the following morning, that no mention should

be made of "the woman," nor that she had gone to the Sisters of the Good Shepherd.

Mary went to the convent stealthily, accompanied by her maid, and interested the good women there in poor Eva, to whom they had so kindly opened their doors. Mary found Eva too sick to recognize her. She became acquainted, during these visits, with a young Italian novice, who gave her an interesting account of her own life, and of the causes that led her to the retirement of a convent. It was an edifying history of self-renunciation, piety, and zeal, that surprised and interested Mary. She could not help wishing that at least a little of that holy fire could inflame her own heart, which seemed to her to be cold and lifeless. But these good impressions, if not obliterated, were rendered for a time faint and indistinct by the round of gay dissipations in which Mary was forced to take a part. Balls, private theatricals, and tableau parties, concerts and literary re-unions followed in rapid succession, and afforded Mary no time to profit even by the instructions which her good father daily endeavored to impress upon her. The splendor of some courtly entertainments, to which Mary and her father were invited, surpassed all that her imagination had conceived. The fascinating manner of some persons "trained to please," the winning affability of others, and the intellectual attractions of many, delighted and, for a time, interested her. If she could believe some votaries of fashion among her newly formed friends—"she was charming"—"her bewitching naïveté" was irresistible—she was "a pure child of nature." But fashion and flattery failed to satisfy the longing desire that had sprung up in her breast. They were to her now but as "sounding brass and tinkling cymbals." Something

more her soul craved. What, she knew not. She yearned for a higher, holier motive for her endeavors. But how to gain it, where to find it, she knew not; she only knew that she was weary, dissatisfied, and unhappy. An indefinable sense of loneliness of spirit—a conscientious fear—a void—a despondency—was increasing upon her daily.

Lady Howard was sitting one morning in her boudoir, reclining upon a luxurious couch, surrounded by books, letters, notes of invitation, and writing materials. Her French maid, Marie, was arranging some article of dress for an evening toilette under the lady's direction, which was at the moment the subject of discussion. Gertrude Ellsmere entered the boudoir, and threw herself upon a low chair by Lady Howard's side, after having saluted her warmly, and complimented her upon her charming appearance.

"Your sweet smile is like a sunbeam to my heart, dear Gertrude," replied Lady Howard. "I am half dead with *ennui*, and have lost my spirits over this tunic, which I am directing Marie to ornament according to my own taste. What think you of the effect?"

"'Tis charming, exquisite; like yourself, dear Lady Howard. Believe me, 'tis superb. Pray forgive me if I tell you I have heard a thousand compliments paid to your exquisite taste; and your lovely daughters make me quite jealous, I assure you."

"Gertrude, you are a generous creature; lay aside your bonnet and remain with me awhile. I am greatly depressed this morning. Marie, unclasp Miss Ellsmere's cloak, and roll that cushioned chair to my side for her. There dear," kissing her, "now tell me of your conquests, since I saw you last. Don't blush, guilty one. I know your power! That is an exquisite

bracelet on your arm. No doubt, 'upon it there hangs a tale.' Come now, begin, coquette," (holding her hand affectionately,) "and make an honest, fair confession of the hearts you have broken at Hollygrove."

"Indeed, dear Lady Howard, I have not one conquest to relate; but *I* must hear of the young officer who, they say, is raving of your daughter Antoinette's beauty. I heard last night that Lord M. had sworn that *he* would possess her hand before six months had passed, or forfeit the diamond ring on his finger, given him, they say—"

"Lord M.!" interrupted Lady Howard, a cloud passing over her countenance. "Lord M., the crazy lover of the American actress, my daughter's admirer!"

"Pardon me, Lady Howard; do not be angry; I only repeated what I heard. It is said that while you and Monsieur F. were looking over the portfolio of drawings in the library, the day you dined with him, Lord M. and your daughter were making love in the conservatory, and indeed, to tell you the truth, mamma sent me this morning to put you on your guard, and tell you that he is bankrupt and a notorious gambler, who seeks your daughter's hand to retrieve his fortunes."

It was some time before Lady Howard could reply. Her face flushed and her bosom swelled with anger.

"I knew it. I felt the presentiment of ill, but I'll crush it in the bud. *My* daughter fall a victim to the discarded lover of a low-born actress! *I* permit such a disgraceful alliance? never! Thank you, Gertrude. I am perhaps too much excited. This report must be stopped. I'll send her to—"

The conversation was interrupted. Mary came in

to show Lady Howard a beautiful letter from "Aunt Edith," in which were messages and kind remembrances for her friends in London. Lady Howard, accustomed to control her nature, smiled as complacently as if a storm had never ruffled her temper, and read the letter which Mary offered to her with apparent interest.

Gertrude saluted Mary with a profession of warm friendship, and said she was overjoyed to see her dear friend look so charmingly. "If accounts are true," she continued, "our American belle (pointing to Mary) is bearing off the palm everywhere, and is taking the hearts of all our lovers from us. I wish I could possess the secret of your power. It must be your '*sweet simplicity*,' Mary."

Mary did not reply, for she did not believe Gertrude sincere, and she was not yet sufficiently skilled in the language of the *world* to gratify her vanity by saying what was untrue.

"You will appear at Mrs. O'Dash's ball to-night, I suppose?" said Gertrude.

"Not if Lady Howard will excuse me," replied Mary. "I am quite weary. This dissipation does not agree with me."

"She must not excuse you, Mary dear. Your friend Everett Root will be there. This will induce you; he has promised to accompany *me* to-night."

The unexpected announcement that Everett Root was in town, that he would accompany Gertrude to the ball, and the thought that he had not yet called to see her, brought a bright color to her face that betrayed her feeling. Complaining of a headache, she begged Lady Howard to excuse her, and she hastily left the room.

"What extraordinary emotion she manifested; with all my teaching, the child has not yet learned to conceal a thought of her heart," said Lady Howard. "Though I never heard of this person before, I saw at a glance that she is interested in him. Who is he?"

"A young American gentleman; the very soul of honor; handsome and intellectual; generous to a fault; enthusiastic, and possessing as warm a heart as ever beat within a human breast," said Gertrude.

"Upon my word!" replied Lady Howard, laughing. Her experienced eye detected the cause of the blush upon Gertrude's cheek, when she had concluded this eulogy. "Young Everett is the king of hearts, I fear," she said. "Is he interested in Mary Staunton? I am surprised she never mentioned him to me."

"Ah! dear Lady Howard, 'tis a thousand pities she ever met him."

"I understand. Unrequited love. He loves another?" asked Lady Howard. "I see the story now. Poor girl!"

Gertrude blushed and sighed, and made no reply, but looked so conscious of being the adored one, that Lady Howard required no more."

"It will be better that she does not meet him," said Lady Howard. "I will grant her request to stay at home."

"I fear she will suspect that I have told you this. For worlds I would not have her think so. Pray, dear Lady Howard, *insist* upon her going."

Gertrude so far from driving away dull care from Lady Howard's heart, had considerably added to its burthen, notwithstanding that she had sugared over her honey words with praise and sycophantic adulation. Having accomplished the object of her visit, which was

to warn Lady Howard against Lord M., and to lead her to believe that Everett was *her* admirer, she departed.

It was now no longer a matter of surprise to Lady Howard, why Mary had become so changed of late, so silent, thoughtful, and so little interested in society.

"My lady desires to speak with you, Miss Staunton; please come to her boudoir," said Marie, who had been sent to Miss Staunton's room.

Mary rose, looked in the mirror at the deep-red spots upon her face produced by crying, and replied:

"What a fright I've made of myself; how can I go?" at the same time leaving the room in an absent manner, and walking rapidly to the boudoir.

"Come in, my dear; come in," said Lady Howard, in a soothing tone. "Tears! who has troubled you? Tell me, my dear."

"No one, Lady Howard, but my own jealous disposition. This has caused my tears. Forgive me; I ought to feel ashamed, and I do, to be forced to make such a confession."

"Of whom are you jealous, my dear?" inquired Lady Howard, in her sweetest tones. "Come tell me, my dear."

"Of an old friend," replied Mary, embarrassed. "I know you will blame me for my simplicity in confessing it; but I have made a vow to be truthful, cost what it may, and I will be so. You ask me, Lady Howard, and I will tell you; and will trust to your honor and friendship not to betray my confidence."

Lady Howard put her arm around Mary, and drew her towards her.

"Jealous of a friend?" she inquired, seeing Mary hesitate; "well, tell me who the friend may be." Still Mary was silent. "A lover?"

"Oh no!" said Mary earnestly, "only an *acquaintance*. Indeed he is no more. He never spoke to me of love."

"This confirms what Gertrude said," thought Lady Howard. "Why are you jealous of him then, my dear?"

"I do not know, unless it be because I feel so unworthy of his friendship, that I think he *must* despise me. Jealousy, they say, implies a consciousness of inferioity; I respect him and admire him so much, that I cannot bear to be an object of indifference to him."

"My dear Mary, do you not know that you are on dangerous ground? This is love; 'tis all a pure-minded girl can know of love until she has been offered the heart of him to whom she would *not be an object of indifference!* May I ask if Everett Root is the *friend* of whom you speak?"

Mary pressed the hand of Lady Howard, and made no reply.

"You say he is not a lover?" Mary shook her head.

"Then you must not give him another thought."

After a silence of several moments, Lady Howard said in a whisper: "Can you bear what I am going to tell you, Mary?" Mary grew pale and trembled; for love is timid and ever foreboding ill. She felt, before Lady Howard had finished the sentence, a presentiment of what she was going to hear. "I am told that he loves another," said Lady Howard, "*and his love is returned.*"

Mary's sight grew dim, and a death-like sickness oppressed her, but making a great effort to control herself, she breathed freely again in a moment.

Mortified and chagrined by the emotion she had manifested, she assured Lady Howard that she had

been ill all the morning, indeed for several days past, and had been obliged to leave the room while Gertrude was with her. Lady Howard remembered it, and remembered too the cause.

"You must give yourself repose, my dear, till evening, and be enabled to show your indifference towards Mr. Root to-night. Be gay and talk much with other admirers. Do not reprove him for not having come to see you, nor treat him coolly. This will prove to him that you do not love him, but that his *own vanity* has deceived him into the belief. I've been told that he has avoided coming to see you since he has come to London, because he is too honorable to wish to encourage a love which he cannot return."

Dashing the tears from her eyes, Mary exclaimed: "If that be so, though my heart should break for love of him, he shall not know it. But *I do not love him*, Lady Howard; *indeed* I do not;" said the proud girl, believing at the moment that these were the true feelings of her heart.

"I admire your spirit. Go to your room, my dear, and take rest. You must act the queen to-night," said Lady Howard.

Mary went to her room, but not to rest.

Everett had returned to London in company with Gertrude, who was unexpectedly called home, the day after Mary left Hollygrove, to see an old friend who had come to London to visit her. Wallace Humphrey had invented a story of the particulars of Mary's engagement with Major Trevelyan, to suit his own base purposes. This he professed to have learned from his cousin Gertrude, Mary's bosom friend, he said, and he confided it to Everett before he left Hollygrove.

Everett had come to London this winter, for the

purpose of attending a course of Medical Lectures, and to practice in his profession under the eye of an old physician of great reputation, a friend of his father, who loved Everett as he would have loved a son, had one been spared to him.

Honor and principle had prevented Everett from continuing his visits to Mary, after Wallace's confidential communication, although in spite of either he still loved her, but endeavored and hoped to conquer an attachment which, under the circumstances, he felt to be wrong and hopeless.

His inclination to talk of Mary led him frequently to the house of Mrs. Ellsmere, where he indulged in reminiscences of Hollygrove; and betrayed, while he fancied he concealed, that his heart loved to linger over the pleasant hours he had passed with Mary Staunton there.

Gertrude soon perceived that she never appeared to be more interesting to Everett, than when she accused him of his preference for Miss Staunton, a subject upon which she could not weary him. And she remarked, also, that he never listened to her music with so much pleasure as when she sang the songs which Mary sung at Hollygrove. Wishing to secure his friendship—if no more—she resolved to play the part of a disinterested friend, and she did so successfully. She drew in time from Everett his confidence, and he frankly confessed his hopeless love for Mary. Gertrude listened to him, and professed the deepest sympathy for his disappointment, but assured him that there was no doubt of Mary's engagement, and that she had not a thought of love for him. "If she had ever loved you," said Gertrude, "would she not sometimes talk of you to me?"

"Does she never speak of me? never inquire why I have not called at Lady Howard's house?" inquired Everett.

"Never," replied Gertrude, assuming a sad and sympathetic tone. "She will no doubt accompany Lady Howard to the ball to-night. Mrs. O'Dash has hinted that it will be a brilliant affair. She has employed artists to decorate her rooms for the occasion, in imitation of Eastern style, I have been told by one who has been favored with her confidence. Lady Howard will not allow her protégé to be absent on the occasion, you may be sure; nor will her own daughters fail to display their many charms. Lady Howard, they say, plumes herself upon the change she is effecting upon this 'chrysalis,' as she calls Miss Staunton. No doubt we may soon look for a gilded butterfly! If you doubt my judgment, come with me to the ball, and see if my suspicions that Mary is indifferent to you, be not true."

Everett consented, and Gertrude hastened to give Lady Howard the impression that Everett was her own accepted lover, and that propriety would require that Mary should be advised to avoid him at the ball. Before leaving the house, she had plainly said as much to Lady Howard, who felt greatly indebted to her for the timely warning. No sooner had Gertrude departed, than Marie was sent, as we have seen, to ask Mary to come to the boudoir.

When evening came, the house of Mrs. O'Dash was illuminated brightly as day. A long row of carriages filled the street in front of the house, and at a long distance from it, from which, in turn as they drove to the door, pretty belles and beaux, all radiant with hopeful smiles, were alighting. The manner in which the

drawing-room had been fitted up for the occasion was truly oriental. From pillar to pillar that supported the lofty ceilings, arches were thrown from which hung festoons of white and crimson satin, ornamented with heavy gold and silver cords and tassels. In the recesses of the windows, there were silver urns in which sweet-scented flowers were burning and filling the air with a delicious perfume. In different parts of the room were mirrors so arranged as to reflect again and again the suite of rooms opening by wide-arched doors one into the other, each fitted up in a different style, all tastefully elegant. From a distant room was heard the music of a full band, who were playing beautiful airs, that fell upon the ear like the "exquisite music of a dream." When Everett and Gertrude entered, in company with Mr. and Mrs. Ellsmere, the drawing-room was filled, and the display before them of beauty and magnificent jewels was dazzling in the extreme, and accorded well with the adornments of the room, which might have graced Sultana Mahmed's court.

"This is a scene of enchantment indeed," whispered Gertrude to Mrs. O'Dash, when saluting her. "Of which you shall be the queen," replied Mrs. O'Dash. "None other than a fairy's wand could have produced such exquisite results," continued Gertrude, and passed on to give way to a crowd of smiling beauties who were waiting to pay their compliments to the hostess. But little interested and as little caring which way he went, Everett wandered with Gertrude through the spacious apartments, seeming to admire the beauty of their costly decorations, but in reality he was seeking in the crowd for that star which, he had long since felt, could alone brighten his path through life's journeyings.

It was late, and Everett had almost despaired of

seeing Mary, when she entered with Lady Howard's party, and passed him. At the time, he was standing before a beautifully sculptured madonna, and was pointing out its beauties to Gertrude who, Mary thought, leaned upon his arm carelessly, like one accustomed to the privilege.

"She has come at last," said Gertrude, "and you must thank *me* for the pleasure of meeting her to-night. I called on her this morning, and insisted that she should come. I told her you would be here." Everett took Gertrude's hand, and pressed it warmly, thanking her from his heart for the favor she had bestowed upon him. Mary saw this, and not hearing the words spoken between them, she could no longer doubt of Everett's love for Gertrude. The pleasure in Gertrude's countenance plainly told the happiness his society gave her.

Mary conversed with Mr. Canfield for a time, and then begged to be allowed to join a party of young ladies near her, to whom she appeared to listen, but took no part in their conversation. Gertrude and Everett remained some time before the statue they had been admiring, and Mary thought she had never seen her so animated and interesting. Pride came to poor Mary's relief, and for a time bound her heart in ice. She was white as the marble pillar near which she stood, and apparently as insensible to what was passing around her, until reminded by Lady Howard, who whispered in her ear that she *must* exert herself or she would cause remark.

"Look at the young lady near the marble column; what a splendid face and form. Who is she, Doctor Root?" inquired a gentleman, who had just joined Everett and Gertrude. Gazing at Mary through his eye-glass,

"Rachel might take her present attitude as a model;" said he. "What depth of feeling there is in her face! How her expression varies. He who knows his heart is weak, of Heaven should pray to guard him from such eyes as hers. I must have an introduction to her. Upon my honor my heart is gone already."

Mary had gathered strength in her silence, and had triumphed in her effort to follow Lady Howard's advice. The brightest hue of rosy red soon crimsoned her cheek, and the lustre of her eye was brilliant and sparkling. A group of gentlemen surrounded her, whom she charmed with her animated conversation, so unlike that of the lifeless belles by her side; and the most experienced observer could not have detected the deep current of dark and bitter waters that flowed beneath the unrippled surface.

Mr. Canfield was delicately complimenting Mary upon the captivating witchery of her smiles at the moment when Everett passed them. Without replying to him, she turned suddenly around, and extended her hand towards Everett, and said playfully and carelessly, "Ah? you thought to pass me unnoticed, Dr. Root? I cannot allow you to forget an old acquaintance *so soon*."

"I dared not intrude upon and interrupt a conversation in which you seemed so interested," replied Everett, still holding her hand, and at the same time manifesting much embarrassment.

"Indeed! I really forget now of what I was speaking. It was nothing of much importance; of that I am very sure."

Mr. Canfield bowed, and acknowledged himself obliged for the compliment. "To him the subject had been of much importance," he said, "and he had supposed Miss Staunton interested."

"I promised you I would be a dull companion to-night and declined coming," said Mary.

"The expectation of meeting your old friend here, I suppose, induced you to change your mind and tolerate my company," replied Mr. Canfield, piqued by the meeting of the old friends, which he feared would break up his plans of a proposal to Mary that night.

"What a seer you must be to have divined so well. Can you tell my fortune also?" said Mary.

Just then a large lady dressed in velvet and a profusion of diamonds, floated a large ostrich feather that was fastened in her hair, in Gertrude's face, who still leaned on Everett's arm, and told her how delighted she was to see her, and insisted she must come to the picture-gallery and see a portrait said to be a fac-simile of her departed husband.

Everett was more grateful to the old lady than words could express, while Gertrude wished from her heart that the good woman had departed with her spouse to Heaven. She withdrew with an ill grace, and did not listen to half the dowager was saying.

The crowd which was increasing pressed closely upon Mary and Everett. To protect her he offered his arm saying, in a whisper, "There seem to be but few people in the conservatory, will you go there? It is most tastefully fitted up."

Mary took his arm and pushed her way silently through mazes of lace and silks till they reached the green-house. A thousand lamps of every hue shed a soft and mellow light upon a profusion of flowers from many a clime, and the sweet music of a fountain that fell into a basin, formed of exquisite shells, was pleasant and soothing.

Mary and Everett walked several times around the

green-house, sometimes speaking in a low whisper, and sometimes walking on for several minutes without uttering a word, fearing to break the spell with which their hearts were bound. It was to both a happiness that could be better understood by silence. Mary would have leaned more confidingly upon his arm had not her maidenly reserve withheld her, and Everett would have clasped her hand in his, but love, pure love like his, approached the idol of his heart with fear lest he should render himself unworthy.

"This is a delightful spot; a pleasant retreat from the glitter and excitement of the brilliant throng within," said Mary; "but you must not allow me to keep you too long from Gertrude; indeed you must not."

Everett a moment watched the expression of her eyes to see if she were really sincere.

"Do you wish me to leave you, Mary?" he asked, unable to comprehend her.

"I wish you to consult your *own happiness*," she replied, with dignity. His love for Gertrude for an instant again disturbing her mind and chilling the blood that receded from her face.

"Is it then a matter of indifference to *you*, Mary?" inquired Everett in a tone of voice so earnest that she could not doubt its truthfulness. It touched her heart, and in the natural simplicity of her character, she rested her hand upon his arm and gazed lovingly into his face. Covered with blushes, and with tears in her eyes, she said in a low whisper, "How well you know your power; it would be better if I *were* indifferent, Everett."

Before he could reply they were startled by a loud laugh behind them.

"Here they are," exclaimed Wallace; "what a

glorious place for a proposal. Verily *I* could make one here."

Lady Howard followed him accompanied by Mr. Canfield and Gertrude.

It required but a moment's reflection to show Mary that she had acted with too much impulse. Why had she forgotten the pressure of Gertrude's hand? Everett was annoyed and disappointed beyond expression at the interruption. He had hoped to have a better understanding with Mary, but moments of happiness such as he had just passed were beyond anticipation, and buried in oblivion the sorrows of days and months which suspicion had created.

"Let us go to the picture-gallery, Mary," he said, in a tone tremulous with the deepest feeling. "I have some news from home of importance to communicate to you." Mary hesitated; a severe glance of reproof from Lady Howard decided her. "Later in the evening come for me," she whispered, and took Lady Howard's arm, bowing adieu to Everett and Mr. Humphrey, who remained in the conservatory.

"Confoundedly captivating girl, 'pon my honor," said Wallace. "I do not wonder your heart is gone, but it is no use. How magnificent she appears to-night. I never saw one changed so much. I've been telling Lady Howard that she has made her reputation by transforming the American rustic into a captivating belle. What can have been the secret? Lady Howard declares that we all look through a golden medium upon Miss Staunton. Perhaps we do; but I am free to confess she looks queenly, unadorned to-night. Did you see Lord M—, in the library with Ellen Howard? There's trouble coming from that quarter yet. He is looking around now for his 'adowable love!' I'll go

and take her away from him." Away went Wallace, to disappoint the lovers; and Everett was left alone.

Again and again those earnest words, 'how well you know your power,' passed through his mind, and filled him with a wild ecstatic happiness. 'It would be better if I *were* indifferent, Everett.'—"What can she mean? Does she love me, but is bound to another? Oh dreadful thought; and yet it must be so! If not why would it be better that she were indifferent? Could I debase myself so low as to induce her to break an engagement with another? With whom?—when?—where?—"

Mary leaning upon Mr. Canfield's arm reached the picture-gallery without losing a flounce from her zephyr dress. They sat down opposite an exquisite painting of Desdemona, in whose eyes love beamed deeply, devotedly. But Mr. Canfield mistook the downcast look of the maiden by his side, and the thoughts that subdued the light of those soul-lit eyes which he now watched so anxiously. Sighing heavily, he aroused Mary from her sweet reverie by a declaration of his love, in words so full of feeling that she thought it a pity she could not love him, and said "No," with so much hesitation, that he doubted no longer that she was, in time, all his own.

Mr. Canfield remained some time silent after having heard the fatal but potent little word "No." Mary endeavored to relieve his embarrassment and disappointment by speaking pleasantly on other subjects; but even her sweet voice seemed to fall upon an ear deaf to all subjects but *the one*, and she too soon became silent as the gentleman by her side, who was now planning how he could escape without seeming to run away! Mary's better judgment began to condemn her for her

thoughtless confession to Everett, which she would give worlds to recall. Where was her pride? Where was her dignity? And what must he think of her? were questions she asked herself, and the answer could have been read in the deep blush now upon her cheek. Lady Howard approached them, and introduced to Mary, Mr. Edgerton, the young gentleman who had made such special inquiry respecting her, from Dr. Root. In the drawing-room all was in motion, fairy forms, and forms that were not fairy, were swiftly revolving in the bewitching waltz and polka. Mr. Edgerton invited Mary to join the dancers, and permit him the pleasure of a polka with her, but she confessed to the *unfashionable* simplicity of not dancing those dances. "Her father," she said, "had not approved of them, and it required no effort for her to gratify his wishes respecting them." "Look at that lovely blonde reposing upon the shoulder of my friend, Lord A—," said Mr. Edgerton, "and that brunette in crimson waltzes with a captivating ease. This is your first winter in London, I hear, Miss Staunton? Pray tell me your impression of our fashionable life; for fashionable life you must see if Lady Howard introduces you into society."

"I wish I had the power to express my impressions;" said Mary, "but I have not; perhaps I anticipated too much."

"You are disappointed then? I think you would have preferred those circles whose pleasures are more intellectual, more social. We have charming society in London. A city like this affords many opportunities for the gratification of a refined taste, such as I am sure would delight you, Miss Staunton. If you are fond of the fine arts it will afford me great pleasure if you will

allow me to introduce you to some gentlemen of my acquaintance whose studios will charm you."

Poor Mary became embarrassed and feared to enter too fully on these subjects, but was most opportunely relieved by the approach of Mr. O'Dash, who bowed and begged the pleasure—if she was not engaged—of accompanying her to supper.

"Who is the young creature who has just parted from your side, my dear Lady Howard?" inquired an old gentleman, dressed in the extreme of fashion, and on whose bosom sparkled an immense diamond. "She is charmingly natural; it does one's heart good to see so much freshness. Youth, dear lady, is enchanting in any form. I—I—must make love to this rose-bud. Do you think I've any chance? My well-filled coffers may not be an objection," he whispered, taking a pinch of snuff from a gold snuff-box of exquisite workmanship. "You know, Lady Howard, there's a charm in gold that's irresistible. Any chance think you? hey?" Putting his eye-glass to his face, and scanning Mary, he continued: "She's *divine*, there's so much that is womanly about her, Lady Howard; she laughs and frowns, and pouts like any child. Why these tutored city dames are not like living things. One might as well take a bust of marble to his heart and expect to find warmth as one of these. I *must* marry this season; I'm bound to that. A set of diamonds on my wedding day *to you*, Lady Howard, if I can win a prize. He, he, he!"

Lady Howard laughed, and boxed the old gentleman's ears with her beautiful fan, and pretended to be quite insulted by the insinuation; but from that moment set to work to lay out a plan of action.

"Can you dine with us to-morrow, Mr. Lazarus?"

said Lady Howard, when she said good night to him. A party of gentlemen who surrounded her daughters and Mary when she left the door to step into her carriage heard the invitation, and wondered what had warmed Lady Howard's heart towards "Uncle Jacob," as the ugly pock-marked old bachelor was familiarly called by the young men of his acquaintance.

"With the great—greatest pleasure, madam," replied "Uncle Jacob," bowing obsequiously. Lady Howard smiled significantly, and waved her hand in adieu.

"Who is that ugly looking old gentleman who is to dine with us, Mamma?" inquired Antoinette.

"Ugly looking! my dear, how can you think so! He is the Lazarus of London, one of the richest bankers in the city. Every mamma in town courts his favor; and sensible ladies, too, I assure you."

"Your imprudence notwithstanding all my precautions, astonished me to-night, Mary," said Lady Howard, as soon as the carriage door was closed, and they were rolling over the pavements on their way home.

Mary made no reply, but drew her vail over her face, and sank back behind Antoinette out of sight.

When they reached the house (full of the idea of putting Everett entirely out of the way of the *new* admirer) Lady Howard followed Mary to her room, though it was long past midnight, to systematically lecture her upon the weakness of character, which, according to her ideas, she had betrayed.

"You should not flatter the vanity of the young man," she said, "by showing your preference for him, when you know he is only trifling with your simplicity for the gratification of his self-love."

Mary's eyes flashed with indignation. Her womanly delicacy scorned the idea, while her love for him, all confiding as it was, refused to believe him dishonorable.

"I acknowledge I was imprudent," replied Mary, with dignity, "but I do not believe Everett is the heart less man you represent him, Lady Howard."

"Remember, Mary," she replied, "that you have but little experience in the world, and cannot therefore judge of character as I can. Did you not say to me this morning that Everett Root had never spoken to you of love?"

"I did, nor has he ever done so."

Lady Howard raised her eyes, and shook her head. "What must I think then of what I saw to-night! I did not hear your words, but your confiding attitude, Mary! standing by his side and looking into his eyes with such expression of interest as only lovers give!"

"I am sure I did not intend it, and was not aware of having done so. Are you sure you are not mistaken, Lady Howard?"

"Most sure. If you are not in love you will not object to repeat your conversation. What were you saying at that moment? Surely I could not have been deceived."

Mary stood before Lady Howard who had thrown herself upon a couch. Endeavoring to recall the exact words she had used at the time they were interrupted, she remained silent and looked perplexed for several moments, then exclaimed, "Ah, I remember." A deep color flushed her face and covered her neck. It was evident to Lady Howard that she had not been mistaken.

"Well?" said the lady, opening and shutting her fan.

"I would rather not repeat it, Lady Howard," said Mary.

"Fie, fie, Mary," said Lady Howard, in a tone of bitter scorn. "Had I not been requested by your father to take your mother's place, it would not be my duty to express my disapprobation of your conduct, since you are my guest; but let it pass; we must remove the idea from Mr. Root's mind that you want any of that delicacy of feeling which is woman's charm."

"Indeed, Lady Howard, I meant no harm," said Mary, bursting into tears. "What can I do; what must I do to remove such an idea from Everett's mind?"

Lady Howard paused a moment before replying, then said, "I will write a note to him in the morning that will explain to him that you regret what passed." Lady Howard looked towards Mary for consent. She hesitated, for she was studying her own heart to see if it would be truthful to say she did regret what passed. If what she had done and said would, as Lady Howard told her, deprive her of all charm in Everett's eyes, then she *did regret it*, and Lady Howard must know better than she could, she thought. Hesitatingly she answered, "Yes, Lady Howard, I do regret it; say that I do."

"That's a dear, sweet child," replied Lady Howard, rising and embracing her, and then said, "good night," lest Mary might withdraw the permission to write to Everett.

"There is but little pleasure in all this pomp and show," thought Mary, while her maid was taking down her hair. "My head is weary and my heart is more so. It seems to me that I never will be again the light-

hearted girl that entered Aunt Edith's door but half a year ago. Dear Aunt Edith! Winny, give me the letter that lies on my writing-desk."

"You look very pale, Miss; will it not fatigue you too much to read so late at night?"

"No, Winny, I must do something or I will grow sick with this thinking."

She re-read the following letter while Winny patiently took down her braided tresses:

"My Dear Child;—

"*Hollygrove* once again sends you her warmest greeting. With her trees, her flowers, and her fireside you are now so dearly associated that I cannot visit a spot of this old familiar ground that does not remind me of my light-hearted, generous, loving, Mary.

"Is Aunt Edith remembered by her giddy gypsy girl, whose loud and merry laugh still rings in the library?

"The major daily walks to your old places of meeting, and I fancy looks sadder each day when he returns to the house. I thank him, my child, for his love for you; and I thank you for the attention you gave his instructions. Respect to the advice of the aged will ever bring its reward.

"You tell me you have seen much of the gayety of London, and 'have become quite a lady of fashion; that I would scarcely recognize the thoughtless, giddy girl at Hollygrove, if I could see you, statue-like, moving around a drawing-room cold as a pillar of ice, in order to be fashionable.'

"I trust my dear Mary will preserve her natural manner. Nature is charming. I would not dispel the

illusion with which youth gilds life, but beware, my dear child, that it does not mislead your heart. Let your first thoughts be given to God, who made this beautiful world. In all your pleasures forget not from whence they come.

"When the season of pleasure is past will you not return to Hollygrove? It will do your old aunt's heart good to clasp you once more in her arms.

"Hollygrove must be your home, dear Mary, unless you return to America. When will you come again? Can you not soon give me a few days of your time? It is but little more than a pleasant drive from London. Your dear father has promised me a visit; do not let him come without you."

"Dear Hollygrove," thought Mary, laying aside her letter without finishing it, "I would give all this season of heartless pleasure for one hour within your sacred grounds."

The following day Lady Howard took care that Mary should sit next to "Uncle Jacob," at dinner. He patted her on the shoulder, whispered love speeches in her ear, and declared he must send her one of the handsomest presents that could be found in London. Mr. Staunton was absent on business and there was no restraint upon the *young lover*. After dinner, Uncle Jacob joined in a round romp at blind-man's-buff, gotten up by Lady Howard, ostensibly for the children, but in reality for the better acquaintance between the newly introduced. Mary darted with the speed of a fawn from under the outstretched arm of the old man, but at last he screamed, "I have got you," and held her fast till she implored to be released.

"Why, my dear, Mary," said Lady Howard, that night when alone with her, "You have made a con-

quest of a millionaire! There is no end to Uncle Jacob's wealth."

The curl of contempt upon Mary's lip, too plainly told Lady Howard how unfavorable an impression the information had made upon her. From that day no opportunity was lost by Lady Howard to favor the suit placed in her hand for accomplishment. The set of diamonds in the perspective kept her mind on the alert, although in her *advice* to Mary, she assured her she had *only her happiness* in view.

"Far preferable would it be, my dear, for you to marry Mr. Lazarus, and have every earthly comfort, than link your fate with a gay young spendthrift who would leave you sighing at home while he paid court to the latest belle of the season. No, no, don't be foolish. Think of your grand equipage; jewels that might adorn a queen! Why, my dear, I do not know a young lady in London who would not envy you."

"*Would Uncle Jacob ride by my side?*" inquired Mary, scarcely able to control her desire to laugh, so ridiculously did the contrast between them strike her.

"*Mr. Lazarus* might accompany you sometimes," replied Lady Howard, with much dignity of manner, not at all pleased with the levity with which Mary treated the subject.

"Think of the *palace* you would call your home, where you could sing, or laugh, or dance, just as and when you pleased. Not a wish of your heart ungratified that wealth could purchase. Company, pleasure, all your own."

"But," said Mary, laughing, "I cannot get out of this picture an old gentleman asleep in the arm-chair snoring for dear life; perhaps gouty before I was three years married! Only think of bandaged limbs, and

even *I* kept a cane's length off for fear of hurting him!—"

"Mary, you seriously offend me. I am not to be trifled with in this way," said Lady Howard; "your excessive folly will yet lead you to marry *for love*, I suppose. Love in a cottage covered with woodbine is very pretty to sing about, to write about in novels; but neither one nor the other are found to be romantic in real life, my dear."

"I know, Lady Howard, I am very peculiar, but indeed I have no desire to marry at present, nor do I intend to do so until I can honestly give my heart with my hand."

Lady Howard left the room laughing at the senti ment, and closing the door angrily. Mary could not help laughing until she cried at the picture Lady Howard drew of her carriage and establishment with Uncle Jacob as her *loving husband* by her side. It was too amusing!

Before a day had passed after the party given by Mrs. O'Dash, Lady Howard wrote a note to Everett, in which she said she was commanded by her young friend, Miss Staunton, to say that she regretted that she should have given him any reason to believe that an interest for him stronger than friendship had been in her heart, and concluded by saying, it was rumored, and to the best of her belief it was true, that it would not be long before Miss Staunton would be the bride of another.

This Lady Howard believed, for seldom had she failed in her schemes for matrimonial alliances, as alas numbers of illy-mated, unhappy pairs, could testify!

Nothing more was said to Mary on the subject, and the innocent girl believed that a night's rest had

buried all remembrance of her "excessive impropriety of conduct towards Dr. Root."

Why *did* not Everett come to see her? Why had he not come before the ball? were questions she longed to solve.

CHAPTER XXIV.

On the night of Eva's escape, the commotion and confusion in the green-room, when it was ascertained that the young actress had eloped, can scarcely be described. Count Von Wollonstadt returned late that night from the gambling-table, half intoxicated, and more sullen than usual. He was prepared to vent his anger upon poor Eva, as he had often done before when disappointed by heavy losses at play. He had staked and lost all he possessed the previous evening. The fruits of her labors that night must redeem a part of those losses. He had seen the house crowded before he went to the club, and swore, "that every sous it brought should be lost or doubled before he would again darken the accursed door of the theatre." Going to the green-room where Eva was dressed as *the bride*, he reproved her in the harshest tones for her want of strength and nerve, and alarmed her with threats, that curdled the blood in her veins, if she failed that night in the marriage scene, from which she had been carried out almost fainting in the morning's rehearsal. Upon her performance in that scene depended her great success.

"By all that's in Heaven, on Earth, or in Hell, I'll stake my *soul* and *yours*, when all else fails, if you do

not bring down thunders of applause to-night, Eva," he muttered, when closing the door.

What wonder that she fled in wild terror lest his footsteps should follow her and drag her back! What wonder that she lay in that quiet house of refuge panting like a stricken deer that had escaped from the fangs of the cruel tiger! What wonder that she closed her ears in the dead hour of that night to shut out the sound of his dreaded oaths that still rung through the chambers of her bewildered brain! What wonder that she closed her eyes to shut out from her sight the glaring of his fierce eye-balls that seemed staring in dread fascination upon her! But the soft voices of the nuns in prayer fell upon her ear like music from Heaven, and she seemed to sleep.

It was not so with the Count. He had lost again; and again he had promised with oaths the next night's proceeds to the winner, and had hurried from the gambling-table to indulge his bitter feelings of disappointment.

Eva had fled!

At first he stood silent and sullen, gathering strength, while they related her strange disappearance; and the vile pent-up passion of his depraved soul poured forth in a torrent of abuse and curses upon Eva. He raved and threatened death if she was not found; and offered large rewards to those who would seek her out. "Hunt her everywhere, leave not a den unentered," he cried with a demoniac laugh. "She shall not escape me so. She'll ruin me, she'll brand me with the mark of Cain if I let her go! No! No! she must not escape from me till I have redeemed my fortune."

His ravings continued till the broad daylight, and the search went on from day till night again, but Eva

was unharmed. The Good Shepherd protected her. The wolves had left his lost lamb torn and panting on the ground, but they *had not devoured it.* He had taken it in his own arms and carried it back to his fold again.

CHAPTER XXV.

It was not surprising that the great mental excitement under which Eva had been suffering many weeks, and more particularly on the night of her escape, should have at last prostrated her. The morning after her admittance to the asylum, Sister Mary, the infirmarian, went into her room to awake her, and found her very ill. Day and night the nuns watched faithfully; anxiously looking for a return of reason, which had given way beneath the weight of her sufferings. Many days had passed since her entrance into the house. During that time she talked wildly and constantly of her childhood, her father and mother, and of Marvel Hall.

One afternoon when the sun had nearly set, and its departing rays were faintly lingering upon the bed of the invalid, who lay opposite the open window, Eva awoke, as she thought, from a night's sleep. Bewildered, she gazed around the room unconscious of how, or when she came to this strange place. Could it be that she was in another world? Sister Agatha was slowly walking through the room, saying her rosary upon her beads. At one side of Eva's bed was a small oratory, upon which stood a statue of our Saviour fainting under his cross. Above it, hung an exquisite painting of a Madonna, whose beautiful face was partly con

cealed by the drapery which fell around her. Sister Agatha paused, and kneeling before the oratory prayed devoutly in a low tone of voice. Eva listened, and the earnest prayer of the nun filled her with a new delight and gave her an indescribable desire to invoke Heaven. She could scarcely restrain herself from rising and falling upon her knees by the side of the good sister.

This repose and peace which had succeeded the agony her soul had suffered seemed heavenly. Had she awakened to a new life?

"Where am I? How came I here?" asked Eva.

The good sister rejoiced at her return to consciousness, sat down by her side, and in a gentle voice spoke kindly but cautiously of the manner and cause of her coming to the "House of the Good Shepherd;" and told her how constantly they had watched her and prayed that she might be restored, if but a little time, to make her peace with God.

"It is better now, my dear child, that we speak no more to-night. How good God is; suffering is good for us; our hearts would be withered and dry like plants too long exposed to the sun, if it were not that our good Lord sends us trials that we may win a crown. Repentance waters the ground and the barren tree brings forth fruit. You have been very ill; thank God you are better now."

Sister Agatha rang a bell for a light, and ordered some refreshment. To the sister who brought it, she whispered: "Our prayer has been heard. Offer God thanks for the recovery of this poor child."

A few moments after, the light step of one sister after another was heard passing the door, and then a slow and solemn chant came to Eva's ear from the chapel.

"What is that music?" asked Eva.

"It is the voices of the nuns chanting in the chapel."

It was some time before Eva could understand where she was; but when Sister Agatha had explained it to her, tears fell fast upon her pillow. She clasped her hands upon her breast, and was overcome by the deep sense of the humiliating unworthiness that had brought her here.

"Will you pray for me?" said Eva. "I do not know how to pray."

"Repeat the words I say," said Sister Agatha. Three times the sister slowly pronounced:

"*Lord, I am not worthy that thou should'st enter under my roof; say but the word and my soul shall be healed.*"

The chant of the nuns in the little chapel was ended just as Eva had concluded the last word of this humble appeal.

The following morning Sister Agatha sat by her side, and Eva related with simplicity and humility, the causes that led to her folly, and sin.

"Fond of admiration to an excess," said Eva, "my heart was not satisfied unless I could fascinate every one around me. Of this my husband complained, and warned me against its fatal error. I grew angry when he spoke to me on the subject, and became unhappy on account of, what I called, his jealousy. I accepted invitations from Count Von Wollonstadt, a gentleman to whom I had been lately introduced, and from others, to places of amusement, and to parties of pleasure when my husband was prevented from accompanying me. The Count, when first introduced to me, had appeared indifferent to what I thought my charms, and devoted

himself to a pretty young girl with whom I was acquainted. I resolved that he should acknowledge my power. Tableaux and private theatricals were performed in my parlor, and it frequently occurred that the principal characters were personated by Count Von Wollonstadt and myself. From that time his manner changed towards me, and he became the most extravagant of the flatterers that surrounded me. We often spent many hours together during the day; and I frequently related to him the conversations that occurred between my husband and myself on the subject of my fondness for display in society. When I told the Count that my husband reproved me for my indiscretion, and called me foolish and vain, he assured me he appreciated my trials, and would make any sacrifices for my happiness; and urged me to command him. I soon made him my sole confidante, and his sympathy won my unhappy love. He saw this, I think, for, with the most subtle art, he encouraged it, and sought to make me every day more unhappy with my husband, and more fascinated by his own society. He encouraged, too, my love for theatricals, for which I knew I had a natural taste and talent. The applause I won, in my personations of character, was delightful to me." A blush of shame that embarrassed her, overspread Eva's face while she acknowledged this weakness. "The Count praised and flattered me," she continued, "to such a degree that I soon became intoxicated in this new field of triumphs. It afforded him an avenue to assail and undermine my obligations as a wife. My poor husband, as if he foresaw to what I was fast tending, regarded my theatrical representations with the deepest aversion. I was incensed at this, and accused him of jealousy. The Count comforted me, and praised

me. The bright contrast which, in my distempered state of mind, he seemed to present to my husband, gave him more power to control me. He ventured once to speak to me of love in a manner that alarmed me; but he quickly saw that I shrunk, and started, as if stung by a viper, and he did not dare to repeat it. But he knew my supreme folly, and he fostered and stimulated in every way, my love for acting, until I became perfectly infatuated. It seemed to him, I have no doubt, the surest way to overcome me. He saw I was wretched with my husband, and he told me it was because I was buried in oblivion by my unfortunate marriage with a man who was incapable of appreciating my mind and its lofty aspirations. He said it was too late now to *look back;* but should the time ever come when I could no longer bear the chain, should I be forced to burst the bars of my prison, I must remember there was one who would stand by my side—a friend—a brother—all but a lover. Weak and foolish that I was, I thanked him warmly, and felt that he alone knew how to appreciate me. My husband continued to complain of the vanity that induced me to accept those flattering attentions, which were becoming every day more necessary to my happiness. But I was blind to the danger before me. I was ignorant of the precipice upon which I stood. One night an angry discussion arose between me and my husband which separated us for several days. The Count, to whom I, as usual, related the circumstance, said I was cruelly treated, and advised me to leave him, for I ought not to submit to such tyranny. I refused to listen to his suggestions. That night the part of the heroine in a play, in which he acted the lover, was assigned to me. I fancied he looked in my face with a meaning tenderness

when he poured forth the expression of his love. This again aroused me, and I avoided him for several days, making a great effort to put a limit to our intimacy. He noticed the change, suspected the cause, and reproached me with it one evening at a ball at the hotel; and I could not persist in what seemed to be ingratitude and unkindness towards him. Soon after this, a heartless slanderer sent a letter to my husband, accusing me of acts of which I felt I could *never* be guilty. My husband handed me the letter. My anger was excessive against the accuser, and I trampled it under my feet. But when I saw my husband did not defend me —for he believed me guilty—I resolved on the instant to leave him, and sooner die than suffer the mortification in his sight with which his loss of confidence had overwhelmed me. I told him my determination, and turned to leave him. He caught me; but I tore myself from his grasp, and heard him fall upon the floor, in his attempt to hold me. I hurried on to the room of Count Von Wollonstadt. 'The time has come,' said I, 'I have parted from my husband forever. He has accused me of shameful sin, and I can never see him again. I am desolate and alone, where can I go?' He spoke vehemently of the injustice I suffered, and promised to go with me to the remotest ends of the earth, if I required it. He said I must not delay, but hasten out of the hotel. Urged by him, I induced my faithful maid to accompany me, and went to the house of a respectable widow where he said I could remain secreted. I had not continued long in this retirement, before I began to repent of the rash step I had taken, and I resolved to send a letter to my husband, that would lead him to seek a reconciliation and ask my forgiveness for the insulting accusation with which he had

wronged me. The family with whom I had taken shelter were Germans who could not speak English, and I was therefore debarred from all communications with them. The Count came daily to see me, and flattered me with the hope that all would yet be well. I wrote to my husband, but that letter, I now believe, never reached him. I waited several days for an answer. No answer came, and I resolved to return to him, and with the dignity of innocence face the slander against me. I was leaving the house to do so, when the Count met me at the door. He took my hand, and placing his finger upon his lip, led me through the hall, and to my own room, before speaking. Seating himself by my side, he drew from his pocket a large hand-bill, and held it before me. Upon it my elopement was published, together with comments upon my disgrace! I stared at it a moment, and screamed with horror at the sight of the degradation to which I was subjected. 'Where is my husband? Does he live, and permit this?' I cried, half frantic; 'where is he?'

"'It is posted in every part of the city,' said the Count. 'Well may you ask, Eva, where is your husband?' You are indeed forsaken by him; but here is a heart that beats for you. Here is your safety, your defence;' and laying his hand upon his breast, he vowed to be my protector so long as his life should last.

"'There is but one course left to us now, Eva,' he said. 'A small vessel will sail for Europe to-morrow; we must leave in it. Trust me, you shall be happy yet. I have ample means. I will take passage for you, your maid, and myself. You must pass for my relative from this time forth. In Europe you shall have, what has been denied to you here, the opportu-

nity to reach that bright eminence in the intellectual world for which nature has designed and so richly endowed you. Fame shall be yours, such as a Siddons or a Vestris has never attained. You shall be the Corinne of the age!'

"I was weak enough, even in my deep grief, to be excited by his designing words, and there seemed to me to be no other alternative than to do as he proposed. We sailed and reached Liverpool in safety. Would that I could blot out from my memory the agony of deep sorrow that has since then darkened my way. We went to London. The Count endeavored by unwearied attentions to restore me to the light-hearted gayety which he had so much admired in my nature. That he loved me I could not doubt; and that I *had* loved him was the never-dying canker at my heart, from which I could not escape, and which was slowly taking my life. He appeared to possess wealth and influence, and introduced me to a circle of friends who *seemed* to live but for pleasure, and to whom no care could come. They soon joined him in declaring that my talents for the drama were transcendent, and aided by my beauty would place me on the highest pinnacle of fame, if I would but exert myself to reach it. The Count"—Eva paused and sighed—"the Count put me under a severe course of study and instruction. I grew weak and dispirited, and sometimes he found me weeping. At first he encouraged me, but when he saw that I was still unhappy, and that I talked constantly of my husband, whom he endeavored to persuade me had grievously injured me, he looked angrily upon me, and sometimes remained days without speaking to me. Unable to bear this change, I would fall on my knees before him, and implore him not to blame me; for I

had now only him to please. I persevered and labored, day and night, as few can labor and not lose their reason. In an incredibly short time I was considered prepared to appear before the public. The evening of my debut, though preceded by days of dread, and fear of disappointing the Count, was one of success, *brilliant* success. At the close of the play, a crown of laurel was thrown at my feet, and in its centre shone a star of diamonds, of great value. It was placed upon my head. Pale and weak from exhaustion, and the excitement of the performance, I went forward to the footlights and bowed before the audience. From that moment I became their slave, and sought their admiration for the love of that fame which had, more than any other folly, been the Evil Tempter that poisoned the paradise of my home."

Eva paused and wiped her forehead, upon which large drops had gathered. Sister Agatha gently raised her, and supported her by pillows. Giving her a glass of water, she again seated herself by her side, and with gentle words of encouragement desired her to go on.

"Count Von Wollonstadt," Eva continued, "was overjoyed at my success. I had lately learned that he had been many years a professional gambler, and he knew that I could make, by my talents, a fortune that would release him from a heavy debt in which he was now involved. He told me that I must now consent to acknowledge myself to the world, his wife, and take his name in the play-bills. I was shocked by the request, and spoke indignantly to him on the subject. He gave *my* safety and honor as his excuse and motive, and assured me it was the only means by which he could guard me against annoyance and disgrace. I believed him, and allowed my name to be changed to his

assumed one, which was Morland. I shuddered when first I saw it in print, for I felt the power it gave him over me. I never named my husband in his presence after this. All hope of peace now fled from me. I wept day and night. He saw me grow cold and silent, and then I became unable to weep. He feared that my strength would fail, and with it my success. But fortune yet favored me. I still studied and labored hard, and won the rapturous applause of a crowded house night after night—applause which, at first, fell sweetly on my ear, but which I would soon gladly have exchanged for one 'Eva!' from my husband. The Count suspected this and became jealous. He grew sullen and severe, and at last threatened me with exposure to the world if I did not *marry him*, and silence these silly, foolish recollections in my breast.

"It was then I saw his dreadful perfidy, and upbraided him with it. From that time he threw off the veil with which he had concealed his depraved, his dreadful character; and, oh! how heart-sickening was my disgust and hatred for him. The mask thrown off, he abused me, taunted me with leaving my husband, laughed at my 'mock sensibility,' and threatened to publish my marriage to him. But I resisted all threats and entreaties. I had not descended to UTTER SIN. This was all that had remained to me, and I told him that I should preserve it with my life. Why my reason did not give way, I know not. One day, after the most barbarous cruelty, he endeavored to force me to the church where a clergyman, at his request, waited to perform the marriage ceremony between us. I succeeded in escaping from him. I had to play that night, and though, at times, during the performance my brain grew confused and my sight grew dim, they said I

never had acted so well. The pathos of my voice was never so touching, and it was said that I portrayed despair in a manner as terrible as despair itself. But I fainted as soon as the curtain fell, and was hurried to the green-room, where restoratives were applied. The applause was deafening, and the enraptured audience called loudly for my reappearance. Supported between the manager and Count Von Wollonstadt, I came before the curtain only as yet but partially recovered. My appearance added to the intensity of the sympathy I had created, and brought down showers of bouquets to my feet, to many of which were attached rich presents. The newspaper press on the following morning was filled with enthusiastic accounts of the sensation the great actress had created.

"I learned from a person, who annoyed me with his attentions, and who excited Von Wollonstadt's jealousy to a frightful degree, that the Count still lost nightly large sums at the gambling-table, to replace which, he borrowed from this person; and which circumstance accounted to me for his willingness to admit this disagreeable man to my society. Notwithstanding my great success, he became daily more and more cruel and tyrannical towards me. Having resisted his vile attempts to induce me to become his wife, he feared that I would escape from him. He therefore kept me closely watched, and forbade me to receive even female visitors at my house, assuming to himself an absolute control over me. I told him that I would not resist this authority, for to whom could I go? and I could bear his cruelty and would give him the control of my money, if he would never seek my society. I said I had no love for him, but loathed his very presence. He laughed at me for my candor, and promised that I

should dearly pay for that avowal. 'This night,' said he 'you perform a new play, and in the *marriage scene* you will only *rehearse* the part you SHALL *act in life to-morrow, or I die.* See that you do it well. Learn well your part, Eva.' That night I failed. I fainted in the marriage scene, and was carried out. I remember I met—or it seems—I thought I met—an old friend who came in time to save me. But it is like a dream—"

Eva pressed her hand to her forehead, and looked bewildered. "It seems to me that I heard from her *that there was no room for me in the world.* I felt like an outcast on the earth—I grew dizzy—and I can't remember more—"

Eva was quite overcome by this recital, and closed her eyes. She breathed heavily, like one greatly oppressed. Sister Agatha had wept much while Eva was relating the sad story, and it was some time after she had done before the good sister could speak. At length she said, "You *were* saved by your old friend, Mary Staunton, as you supposed, poor child. She has called to see you several times, and although it is contrary to the rule of our Institution to permit visitors to see those under our care, we made an exception in her favor, but you did not know her when she came. Thank God, you are better. Rest now, you need repose."

CHAPTER XXVI.

At a dinner party given by one of Mr. Staunton's friends, he met an old acquaintance who had recently arrived from New York, who mentioned to him that Mr. Ellory had been some time in the city, transacting business for several large firms in New York, that were in danger of failing.

"I learn," he added, "that he has been successful, which will secure a fortune for himself."

The following day Mary and her father called to see Mr. Ellory, and resolved to tell him that his wife still lived. They found him worn with grief, though calm exteriorly. The unexpected visit of Eva's old friend seemed so painfully to renew the poignancy of his suffering, that the subject on which they intended to speak was not alluded to on this visit.

Mr. Staunton called frequently, but left again and again without speaking of Mrs. Ellory. Even recurring to their school-life at Marvel Hall caused the poor man so much agitation that Mary was obliged to avoid all mention of her old acquaintance, or inquiries for any of her old schoolmates.

A month had now passed since Mr. Staunton's first visit. It was ascertained that Mr. Ellory had closed the business for which he came to London, and that he would return to New York. Eva was still very ill.

Every moment that Mary could withdraw herself from the dissipations and amusements in which she was required to take a part, was spent at the convent by the side of the heart-broken and disconsolate penitent.

Mr. Staunton felt that he must delay no longer, but nerve himself to the task of telling Mr. Ellory the sad circumstances of his wife's life, and her escape from Von Wollonstadt. From the day she left him, the fond husband had hugged to his heart the improbable idea that Eva had left him to go into seclusion, and was now pining over the wrong and injury offered to her by his want of confidence. Where to find her he knew not. He had been wearied seeking her.

It was late one evening, when two friends were still conversing with deep interest, in a room at the Hotel ——. Every one in the house had long since retired, and not a light was seen except in their room, and from a lamp that burned in the hall. One, Mr. Staunton, was sitting by the table in the centre of the room, resting his head upon his hand in an attitude of intense thought, and painful anxiety. He looked grieved and disappointed.

The other, Mr. Ellory, was pacing the room with a slow and heavy step, apparently suffering an agony of despair, that seemed almost to deprive him of reason. He pressed his hands tightly against his heart, as if to keep it from breaking, while he groaned aloud,

"My God! Staunton," he exclaimed, turning suddenly towards him, "I shall die. Till now I believed her innocent; and I have loved her better than my life."

Mr. Staunton attempted to defend Eva. "Call her *woman*. Don't call her Mrs. Ellory," interrupted Mr.

Ellory, "I despise, I loathe her. I could not live if she were near me, dreadful outcast that she has become." He sank into a chair and became nearly convulsed by his efforts to control his emotion; and then he gave way, and sobbed and wept like a child.

"She loves you and abhors the villain from whom she has endured the greatest cruelty," said Mr. Staunton.

"Don't mock me, Staunton. It is enough that I am trampled to the dust. She deserved the cruelty she has received."

"She was dangerously ill last night, but if she still lives," said Mr. Staunton, "would you not see her and forgive her before she dies? She asks it, Ellory."

"Where is she? I'll— Before she dies! Where is she?" said Mr. Ellory, starting from his seat like one half maniac; then falling back again, he shook his head mournfully.

"No! No! I could not forgive her if she were dying. I could not. She has wronged me too deeply!"

"If she has repented, and can prove to you that she was enticed away unwillingly by an artful villain who deceived her? Remember, she was very young."

"Yes! yes! she was *very* young," interrupted Mr. Ellory, still sobbing. "I know she was very young, and never had a mother since she could lisp a mother's name."

"You will *see* her, Ellory, though you can't forgive her. She is very, very ill."

Mr. Staunton paused and waited for a reply. They had talked long hours on the subject, and, two or three times before, Mr. Staunton had brought him to this point, and then bitter feelings of anger, jealousy, and hate, would rise and crush his better nature.

"Where is she?" he inquired.

Mr. Staunton knew the shock it would be to the

poor husband to think of her among the Magdalen penitents at the "House of the Good Shepherd," and he hesitated.

"Where is she?" repeated Mr. Ellory, eagerly. "Don't tell me she is dead or I'll go mad."

"In—the—House—of the Good Shepherd," said Mr. Staunton, in a low voice.

"My God!" exclaimed Mr. Ellory, "has it come to this?" His head fell heavily upon the table before him, and he lost all consciousness for a time.

It was some moments before Mr. Staunton could arouse him. He rang the bell, which was answered by a half-awake servant, who awkwardly assisted to put him on the bed. Mr. Staunton remained through the night by his side and attended him carefully, and dared not again allude to the subject that had nearly broken his heart.

Several days elapsed before the invalid was sufficiently restored to leave his room.

Mary called at the convent, and told Mother Agatha of all that had transpired between her father and Mr. Ellory; and the good mother endeavored to prepare Eva's mind for a meeting, in case her husband should in time yield. But she feared that an interview might retard the patient's improvement, which seemed slow and doubtful.

Her old companion was the only visitor admitted to her sick room, and she seldom left it without tears. Eva warned her friend in earnest and pathetic appeals against a thoughtless life like hers, to which she looked back with unavailing regret.

"This remorse is fearful beyond description, Mary. The time to lay up treasures of good works has passed, and I must soon appear *empty handed* before my God. Oh! Mary! take warning. Do not be idle. Labor

for your soul that will never die. The good sisters have taught me how much I ought to have done for the love of God. If I recover, my time shall not be spent for the follies of *this* world."

"What can I do, Eva?" said Mary.

"Seek out the suffering and aid them; instruct the ignorant; support the weak by your example and advice, and do all for the sake of Jesus who left them to your care, and he will reward you abundantly. Oh! Mary, do not forget your soul for the vanities of this miserable world. You have been given much, and much will be required of you. Let my trials, my sins, my vanity, be a warning to you to shun the dangers of pride and worldly ambition. Life, life is given to adorn the immortal soul."

Mary was much affected by these admonitions, and was surprised at the change that had been produced in her friend's thoughts; for, during her first visits to her, she talked only of her husband and her return to him. Now she seldom alluded to him, or to any anticipated happiness in this world.

The physician who attended Eva had given lately but little hope of her recovery, and to the sisters she now seemed fast sinking. Sister Agatha was one day reading to her some meditations from the little work entitled, "Following of Christ," by Thomas à Kempis:

"If thou hast not the favor of men be not grieved thereat; but let thy concern be that thou dost not carry thyself so well and so circumspectly as it becomes a servant of God.

"Acknowledge thyself unworthy of divine consolation, and rather worthy of much tribulation.

"Lose not thy confidence of going forward to spiritual things; there is yet time, the hour is not yet past.

"When thou art troubled and afflicted, then is the time to merit.

"Thou must pass through fire and water before thou comest to refreshment.

"We would fain be at rest from all misery, but because we have lost innocence by sin, we have also lost true happiness.

"We must therefore have patience, and wait for the mercy of God, till iniquity pass away, and this mortality be swallowed up by immortal life."

"There is yet time, the hour is not yet past," said Eva, slowly repeating the words of the book which Sister Agatha had laid down.

"Thank you, sister," said Eva, "how very kind you are to read those blessed words to me. What do I not owe to you and the good sisters who have given me such heavenly instructions! I can never repay you; but our Lord, for whose sake you have taken care of me, will give you the reward he has promised to those who administer to the wants of his erring children; and none has needed that holy charity more than I have done. The diamonds that I wore on that dreadful night, and the jewels that were upon my arms, are of great value. Sister Agatha, I would like to have you take them for the benefit of the suffering members under your care."

"Well, child," replied Sister Agatha, "it shall be so.

"We do not think you have much longer to live. You are growing weaker every hour, and now that you have conceived true sorrow for your past offences, and have received the sacraments, is there any other desire left in your heart unsatisfied?"

"There is yet *one*, sister," she replied in a low whisper. "I *would* like to know that my husband forgives

me. I forgive my enemies, and ask pardon of all whom I have injured."

"Would you be calm if I were to send for him, and not allow yourself to become unhappy if you were disappointed? You remember I told you the other day that he was in the city, but had refused to see you. The humility and patience, with which you bore his refusal, have, I feel sure, gained you much favor with God, my child."

"I would," she replied, struggling to control her emotion.

Sister Agatha left the room and wrote a note to Mr. Ellory, and despatched a messenger with it to the hotel where Mary had told her he intended to remain until he could hear of Eva's restoration to health.

She did not conceal Eva's dying state, and advised him to hasten if he desired to see her.

Like one bereft of reason he hurried to the convent. The door was opened by the porteress, whose sad countenance gave no encouragement to the distracted husband. He followed her silently to the door of Eva's room, and was requested to wait a moment until she could be apprised of his coming before he entered. She had become restless during the past hour, and had asked to be placed before the open window, where "she could see the setting sun, and feel the cool air upon her burning temples." Her hair was thrown back from her fair forehead and fell upon her neck.

The light of the sun was falling upon her calm and beautiful face, upon which death had already set his seal. She was told that her husband was waiting to come in. When he entered and approached her, she closed her eyes, feeling unworthy to look upon him, and extending her emaciated hand she grasped her husband's

in her own, and pressed it to her heart while he knelt before her and sobbed violently.

Life was fast departing from her frail form.

"I am not worthy of this happiness, my *dear*, my injured husband; but believe me, since we parted on that fearful day, I have not been guilty of crime." She paused, and then whispered faintly, "I have loved you to the last, *oh*, *how* tenderly, but dared not return to you."

"Eva, my dear, dear Eva, can you forgive me. Why did I not follow you, find you, and save you? Speak to me, Eva; look at me, my own wife."

"Say—you—forgive—me—before—I—go—" said Eva, bowing down her head.

"I *do* my *dear*, *dear Eva*, from my heart, I do; and *I* ask forgiveness, for I have wronged you. I thought you—guilty, Eva."

She slowly raised her head, and looked into his face earnestly and lovingly. A heavenly smile beamed on her countenance—and she departed!

"Eva! Eva!" he called, wildly, again and again, and implored her to speak but one word more to his poor distracted heart. But she had gone, she heard him not. The good nuns who stood around were greatly affected. In a few moments Sister Agatha unclasped their hands, for Mr. Ellory still held Eva's, though cold in death. They took Eva from the chair, tenderly, and laid her upon the bed. The poor husband stood over the lifeless form of his beautiful wife, and it seemed to him that the love of a lifetime came gushing to his breaking heart. How painfully, how devotedly, he loved her now. What would he not have given to have recalled the past few weeks. How bitterly he regretted having refused to see her. The poor crushed

flower! he had seen it lie withered on the ground, and had trampled upon it!

His convulsive sobs could not awaken her. She felt not his tears that fell in big drops upon her cold cheek. Sister Agatha advised him to leave the room awhile, and endeavor to be resigned.

"Thank God! she truly repented," said the good sister, "and I trust her suffering and compunction, which were great, have been accepted. She has gone in peace, I am sure."

Mr. Ellory yielded to her persuasion, and was led to the parlor, where he remained alone, unconscious of time or any outward thing. The sound of a tinkling bell called the inmates of the house to the chapel, and aroused him. It was soothing in that dark hour, to know that those good Samaritans were offering their prayers for the departed soul of his lost Eva, although it was not his faith to believe that their prayers could aught avail after death had closed the gates of mercy. Yet he was grateful to them. It was soothing, and he involuntarily from his heart repeated,

"*God be merciful to you*, my dear, dear Eva."

"Would you wish to remove your dear wife to-morrow?" whispered Sister Agatha, who had entered the parlor unseen.

Where could he go? he thought. To whom speak of his departed wife? What could he do? To bury her publicly would make known to the world that his wife, his Eva, had died in the asylum for lost women! No! that could not be.

"If you have room for her here, let her rest with you," said Mr. Ellory. "I cannot express my gratitude to you, madam, for your kindness, and for the care you have given my poor wife; my heart is op-

pressed, it cannot give utterance to what I feel. This last trial has been almost more than I can bear."

Arrangements were made between Sister Agatha and the heart-broken husband for the burial, which it was deemed advisable should take place on the following day; and Mr. Ellory departed to his lodgings, where he gave himself up to the grief with which he was overwhelmed. Alone he paced his room and groaned. There was scarce one in that crowded city to whom he could say: "Eva is dead!" and hope to find a sympathizing response in tone or word. The smile that beamed on the face of his departing wife, when she raised her eyes and looked upon him, and the angelic halo of hope that lighted up her every feature at the moment that her soul fled from its earthly tenement; these had made a vivid impression, and came in this hour like a beacon-light from Heaven, to break in upon the darkness and desolation that now overshadowed all earthly things.

CHAPTER XXVII.

At Lady Howard's house that night, a different scene was passing. Her drawing-room was crowded with the elite of her fashionable circle. They had come to congratulate the eldest Miss Howard upon her engagement to an East India merchant, who had amassed a large fortune, that gave him a position which had been denied him at his birth.

Mr. Canfield, Wallace Humphrey, and Mr O'Dash, annoyed Mary during that evening with their attentions, each assuming to himself the right of demanding the favor of her preference. Piqued by the coldness of her manner, Wallace whispered something in her ear, which she received with an expression of dignified contempt. Gertrude Ellsmere, who stood near them, remarked an excited manner and a flush upon Mary's cheek, and begged her to be seated, or they should have a scene, that would call into requisition fans and vinaigrette!

"I do not understand you, Mr. Humphrey," Mary replied, as soon as she could control her feelings sufficiently to speak.

"Have you heard of that singular case that has been reported in the Medical Journal, Mr. O'Dash?" said Mr. Humphrey, not appearing to hear Mary's remark; "a most interesting case! There's a chance for your chivalry."

"Ah aw," drawled Mr. O'Dash, twirling his eye-glass, and fixing an absent gaze on Mary.

"Yes," continued Wallace, "there is an heiress at present in Florence, (by the way, she is an American, Miss Staunton,) a mere child, however, don't let your heart take flight yet awhile, O'Dash; be patient. She is in extreme danger of dying from a nervous disease, which has baffled the skill of the best physicians in Paris and London. They say her beauty is angelic, and that she appears like a visitant from the spirit-land. Her symptoms are remarkable, and her case (unknown to a rich old uncle who has charge of her) has been reported in the Journal by a physician called in consultation. Her uncle has offered a magnificent fee to any one that effects her cure. Now, I've a mind to pass *myself* off for a distinguished M. D., get up a panacea, and start off to Florence; cure her, make love to the little damsel—they say she is about twelve or thirteen—wait two or three years, and if she live till then, fall heir to her million. It wouldn't be a bad idea, would it?"

"The best disposition you can make of yourself, in my opinion," replied Mr. O'Dash, still looking at Mary, whose indifference during his recital annoyed Wallace exceedingly.

"Do you still persist in treating my professions of love with scorn, Miss Staunton?" inquired Wallace, in a low and bitter tone, forcing his way between Gertrude and Mary, and seating himself by her side.

"I have told you again and again, Mr. Humphrey," said Mary, shrinking from the contact, "that I do not regard you, and never desire to think of you; why do you annoy me in this way, on all occasions in your power?"

Mr. O'Dash drew Gertrude to the other side of the

room, and left the poor girl with the villain by her side, who was seeking her hand solely for the fortune he hoped to obtain with it.

"Say you will be mine, and though you hate me now, I'll *make* you love me; I'll return your scorn with so much loving tenderness and generous devotion, that you will smile on me in very pity. Let me be your slave, your worshipper; 'tis all I ask."

"Mr. Humphrey, I cannot listen to you; this is a most untimely occasion to seek for—"

"Are you going away? Do not leave me without a ray of hope; say I may meet you to-morrow—the next day—name the time and place."

"Never," replied Mary, rising; "I desire, I command you, never to speak on this subject again, Mr. Humphrey."

"Never? do you say, 'never?' Are you then determined to cast away my proffered love, as you would shake the dust from off your feet? as you would spurn a beggar at your door? You trample me under your feet like a worm of the earth! You can make me writhe; but I will turn upon you. Remember I *can* injure you, and why should I not do it? Does not the strongest love, if unrequited, turn to hate? If so, how bitterly I can hate you, time will tell. Beware! you know my power too well to trifle with it. Do you still say *never?* Pause, don't reply in haste."

"Never!" repeated Mary; "I defy your threats."

Mary could scarcely comprehend her own strength; it seemed superhuman, for she had feared and trembled like a child when Wallace approached her, lest he had power to cast a spell over her, from which she could not escape.

"Never! Never!" reiterated Wallace, laughing sneeringly, to disguise his disappointment.

Antoinette Howard approached Mary, and told her that it had been a topic of discussion on the opposite side of the room, what the subject could be, between her and Mr. Humphrey; and she had volunteered to satisfy their curiosity.

"I've no objection to repeat my part," said Mr. Humphrey, rubbing his hands together, and laughing loud. "It chances to be my ill or good fortune," he continued, "to know many little occurrences of Miss Staunton's early life; the remembrance of which is not at all times as agreeable as it might be. I was reminding her that a little suffering friend of hers is now in Florence, one, by-the-by, for whom young Root has a prodigious partiality."

"You have been recalling some love affairs, no doubt," said Antoinette. "But pray how came you acquainted with Miss Staunton's early life?" watching the expression of Mary's face, which had become very pale. "Miss Staunton is an enigma to me, I must confess," said Antoinette, "so many admirers and yields to none! Is it her first love?" Mary rose, and left Wallace with Antoinette, without seeming to heed his allusions; but every word burned deeply into her troubled heart.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The following morning, Mary, attended by her maid, went to the convent to see her old friend. A carriage was standing at the door, from which Mr. Ellory alighted. The expression of deep grief upon his face, told Mary what she had feared to hear. His convulsive grasp of her hand when she extended it towards him, explained to her that Eva was no more.

The portress led the way to Eva's room. The windows were open, and the shutters closed.

Upon a bier in the middle of the room, surrounded by burning lights, she lay calm and beautiful in death. A crucifix, which she had held in one hand while dying, was on her bosom, and over it were fresh roses which had recently been broken from the branch. At her head, upon a pedestal, was a statue of the Blessed Virgin with extended arms, seeming to look down upon her with loving benignity.

Mr. Ellory stood long by the side of the lifeless form of his loved wife, and gazed in mute grief upon her. "How calmly my Eva sleeps! she has no sorrow now!" he murmured, unconscious of any one's presence.

Mary sat down by the window, and gave way to her feelings in uncontrolled weeping.

A nun entered the room, and requested Mr. Ellory

to retire a few moments to the parlor. In but a little time after, the bell tolled slowly. Sister Agatha came to the parlor, spoke in a low tone to Mr. Ellory and Mary, and they followed her to the little chapel, where they found the coffin which had just been laid at the foot of the altar. Soon the veiled nuns of the institution, with downcast eyes, assembled and took their seats. A moment after, all knelt and offered silent prayers for the departed. Then three nuns arose, and walked slowly through the aisle to the altar; one bearing a large cross, and the others, on either side of her, holding burning lights in their hands. Four others followed, and took up the coffin, to bear Eva to her last resting place. The nuns with the cross and lights preceded them, and the rest of the order followed in procession, two and two, chanting in sad and solemn tones, the sublime and beautiful 50th Psalm, "*Miserere*," commencing,

"Have mercy upon me, Oh God, according to thy great mercy."

"And according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my iniquity."

Mr. Ellory and Mary were the only mourners for her whom the world had so recently crowned with its brightest chaplets of fame. Before an open grave, in the inclosure of the convent, where a priest waited their coming, they laid down the coffin, upon the lid of which was engraved, on a silver plate, "*Eva Ellory*." Amid the prescribed prayers, the coffin was lowered, and the sexton returned the earth upon its lid. The sound of the falling earth upon his loved one, pierced the heart of the distracted husband, who, overwhelmed, prostrated himself in utter agony upon the ground.

Poor Eva! may she rest in peace!

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CHAPTER XXIX.

MARY excused herself for not appearing at dinner that evening. Complaining of fatigue, she was allowed a few hours of undisturbed repose in her own room, which she spent in meditations called up by the heart-rending scene through which she had passed that day. The visitation of death coming so unexpectedly, so fearfully, to one while in the midst of earthly pomp and glory, was a lesson which had deeply engraved the truths of eternity upon her heart; and she longed for some friend to whom she could unburthen her thoughts. But there was not one near in whom she could confide them; and she must wrestle alone with the good and ill that filled her mind. "Though poor Eva had reached the enviable place of fame she so long desired," thought Mary, "and had wealth at her command, she was wretched and could find no peace while she strayed from the path of duty. It would seem as if God sent me, as his humble messenger, to save her from that monster's power. It was all very, very strange. Even Lady Howard's cruel refusal was the means that led her to reconciliation. How mysterious, how incomprehensible are the ways of Providence! How full of loving-kindness!—"

"Well, philosopher, what are you propounding?" said a voice behind Mary, and in another moment Lady

Howard clasped her in her arms. "You have not yet opened your package; where is your curiosity, woman?"

"What package? where?" inquired Mary.

Lady Howard pointed to a box upon the table, tied in blue ribbon, and enveloped in sweetly perfumed tissue-paper. Mary untied the ribbon, and opened the parcel. It was a morocco case, with a note addressed to Miss Staunton, and sealed with the motto, "Love waits for thee; come quickly." Breaking the envelope, she read aloud the following note:

"Will the sweet Lily of the valley accept this token of love from one who would ever be her friend and admirer? JACOB LAZARUS."

Throwing down the note upon the table, she opened the case, and within it was an exquisite set of pearls. The necklace and bracelets were clasped with doves of gold that held in their beaks two pendant hearts of curious workmanship.

"I cannot accept these," said Mary, laying the bracelets back into the case again.

"Why not?"

"Would it not be considered a mark of encouragement, Lady Howard, for I can no longer deny a knowledge of his marked attentions to me, absurd as the idea may appear. I have already refused to listen to his professions."

"It would offend him to return them, Mary," said Lady Howard. "Not knowing what the box contained, supposing it to be no more than a trifle for a child, perhaps a box of bon-bons, I desired the messenger to say that Miss Staunton accepted it, and returned her thanks. They are most exquisite, and will suit admi-

rably to fasten on your veil to-night. Gertrude was here to-day, and begged me to tell her what our costumes were to be at the masquerade; but not a word escaped my lips on the subject."

This was not true; for in Lady Howard's well-laid plans for that night's work it was necessary that more than she should know what characters Mary and her daughters would personate.

Mary sighed, and listlessly laid the jewels upon the table. Not many months ago baubles like these might have interested her, but they had no charm now to her oppressed heart. All earthly things, however bright, looked changed to her. Her father's love, and his untiring devotion could brighten her eye and make her heart glad with the love and gratitude she returned to him; she liked to sit by his side and talk of how well and how tenderly she would care for him when he made her his housekeeper; and how earnestly she would strive to become wise and accomplished for his sake. But Eva's sad fate was ever in her mind, and she had her own hidden griefs to contend with; her wrongs to Alice; her hopeless love for Everett; with these she must struggle in secret and alone. To do so required all the effort she could make, for she had not yet learned to look entirely to a higher power for strength to do her duty.

Dissatisfied with the indifference with which the casket of jewels had been received, Lady Howard left the room, and desired the French costumer to prepare Miss Staunton for the masquerade.

Mary seated herself before a large mirror and passively allowed the person employed for the occasion, to arrange her dress as she liked. The character chosen for Mary was Lallah Rookh. Lady Howard had pri-

vately arranged that Wallace Humphrey should follow her continually during the evening to prevent others from paying her attention, for she feared that some more favored than Mr. Lazarus might be accepted. A beautiful full-lace veil was fastened in her hair, and almost enveloped her. The pearls just received were placed across her forehead, and then braided in her glossy hair with exquisite taste. A cornelian amulet was hung upon her neck, which was of transparent whiteness. A rich oriental shawl girdled her waist, and confined her full robe, which was of India silk of the faintest color of the rose.

Mary was fully occupied with thoughts far removed from the anticipated festivity for which she was preparing. The strange and ever-shifting scenes of life occupied her mind. The time when the world lay before her like a far outstretched paradise of delight, into which she might enter and partake of its untold joys and happiness, had vanished, swiftly vanished. A warning voice had come to her, ere she had passed the portals. Eternity and its truths had been impressed upon her heart by the last days of the dying Eva. Full as they were of sorrow, and yet full of faith and hope, they seemed to come to her in the midst of all the dazzling excitement of worldly life, like the hand-writing upon the wall of Belshazzar's feast.

"Where am I?" thought Mary, "one hour standing at the grave of a friend, the next with folly!"—"I feel quite ill," she said, turning to the costumer, who thought the young lady unpardonably indifferent to the becoming dress on which she was displaying her artistic skill.

"Are you not a real queen, Mademoiselle?" exclaimed the Frenchwoman, delighted with her own success, and not heeding Mary's remarks. Mary looked

mechanically into the large mirror, but saw nothing distinctly, for she had become bewildered and excited. Wallace Humphrey's importunities had caused her to pass a sleepless night, and the sad scenes at the convent had added so much to her nervous depression, that she was no longer able to control her feelings.

"I must undress," said Mary; "say to Lady Howard that I am too ill to go to the masquerade to-night."

"Always excuses of late," said Lady Howard; "what does this mean? I'll see her myself." But when she saw her, Lady Howard could not deny that Mary must give up the pleasure of that evening; it was too apparent that she needed good care, or must anticipate a serious illness.

Before her veil and ornaments could be removed, Mary's face was flushed by a burning fever.

Her plans frustrated, Lady Howard cared but little for the masquerade, but she must accompany her daughters. Antoinette was dressed as "FOLLY," decorated in her cap and tiny tingling bells. Ellen represented "NIGHT," and sailed majestically through the rooms, supporting the moon upon her forehead and enveloped in shining stars.

CHAPTER XXX.

In spite of Lady Howard's letter of explanation to Everett, Mary's sweet admission of her interest in him, so simple, so childlike, still sounded in his ear. It had touched a chord in his heart that had silenced many doubts, and had strengthened his love tenfold. He thought he would go to the masquerade, and see her, if he could do no more; "he knew," he said, "he could discover her air and movement in any dress." It was a singular coincidence that Everett had chosen the character of Feramorz, and wandered all the evening from room to room in search of the princess of his heart. But his lute hung untouched by his side; there was no music in its chords when she was absent. Leaving the crowd unnoticed, at an early hour he returned home, dejected and disappointed. Throwing off his costume he took Lady Howard's note from his writing desk and read it again and again, musing a long time upon its contents, and endeavoring to understand its true meaning. "Mary regrets the confession, and disowns any other feeling than friendship. She will ere long be affianced to another." Everett again read the passage, "but this," said he, "is only Lady Howard's belief, she does not say it *will* be so. To whom? Can it be that Mary will be affianced to Major Trevalyan? No! impossible. I will go to-morrow and see Mary, and

hear from her own lips that she regrets what passed in the conservatory, and not till then will I believe it."

Restlessly and sleeplessly Everett passed the remainder of the night, and welcomed the light of the morning with an anxious heart.

After breakfast he thought he would call at Lady Howard's house, and request the privilege of a private interview with Mary, which he trusted would throw some light upon the alternate fears and hopes with which his life was rendered miserable.

To his mother Everett had confided the troubles of his heart, and in her had found a safe confidante, and a warm sympathizer. Mrs. Root could scarcely believe that so great a change had been effected in Mary's appearance and character, as Everett represented, and made many allowances for the extravagant praise he bestowed upon her "queenly dignity,"—"the noble generosity and ardor of her impulses,"—"the unaffected simplicity of her character,"—"the great natural strength of mind she had manifested on various occasions,"—all of which she must admit were materials from which great results might be expected in the care of such a person as her son Everett. Mrs. Root smiled with maternal pride when reading the letters from her son, and wondered how it was possible for any lady to resist charms of mind and heart like his!

While Everett was at breakfast the postman brought him letters from home, that gave him great anxiety. His mother mentioned that painful reverses of fortune had come to many of their friends; and related the struggles they were making to overcome them. His father, she wrote, had suffered also, but not severely. She advised close attention to his studies, and hoped he would endeavor to make himself prominent in his pro-

fession. Breaking the seal of a letter addressed in his father's handwriting, he read the following:

"I must give you a sad picture of the state of affairs here. The news of the fearful monetary crisis amongst us must soon reach England notwithstanding the efforts of our merchants to suppress it. There have been failures among the wealthiest firms. Long-established bankers and merchants have become bankrupt. God only knows where and when it will end.

"The company in which our friend Staunton placed unlimited confidence, and in which, report says, he invested a large fortune for his daughter, is in danger of utter ruin. I trust, however, it will weather the storm. I would strongly advise his immediate return to New York. There is nothing like standing at the helm of one's own vessel when danger is near. If Mr. Staunton is in England I beg that you will show him this letter as soon as possible.

"In any event it will be no harm to do so."

Everett had scarcely finished reading these letters, when a friend came in who had just arrived from Florence, and handed him a letter from Mr. Lincoln.

"My dear Everett," he wrote, "that you, who are so fond of all that is pleasant in life, should remain in the dingy smoke of that great city of London, surprises me. I am afraid the soot will tarnish the purity of your vestments!

"If your heart is not engaged there, pray come to us, and let the light of your countenance cheer the drooping spirits of my little suffering niece. The dear child has such faith in your care and advice, since your kindness to her at sea, that I feel bound to offer you any inducement in my power to secure them for her.

"It will be a good place for study, and you shall be

liberally rewarded for your services. My brother has just come in and tells me that you are attending lectures this winter in London, and practising in the hospital. I scarcely can expect, then, that you will think it advisable to accept my offer. If you do, depend upon it you shall not regret it. Should you effect a cure in my niece's case, your fortune will be made; for it has so far baffled the skill of the best physicans in London and Paris. Some of our friends have proposed the waters and air of Baden-Baden. I do not like to make a change until you see Alice and approve of the step. I have great confidence in your clear good sense and previous knowledge of her case. These will give you advantages over many others.

"She is ever talking of you; and the idea has taken possession of her mind, that, if Doctor Everett Root were here, he would give her something to relieve her pain. *Her suffering is intense;* and at times reconciles me to the thought of parting with her cheerfully, should the great God, who watches over her and us, call her to rest.

"If you decide to come, I beg that you will make as little delay as possible. Let me hear from you by return of post.

"My little pet is lying upon a couch near me, and watches the movement of my pen that sends this message to you. She says, 'Ask him to come quickly, uncle; tell him Ally says so.'"

Everett was bewildered. How to act, what to do, he could not tell. He could not bear the idea of leaving London.

How could he lose the medical opportunities he was then enjoying?

A moment's reflection determined him to postpone

a decision until he had seen Mary. After an interview with her he could better decide whether to remain or go to Florence. "Poor Mary," thought Everett; "it will be a sad change in her life, should my father's fears be true. God grant they may not for her sake."

Everett hastened to —— street, and at an early hour entered Lady Howard's drawing-room.

The servant announced to him that Mr. Staunton had gone to Hollygrove, but would return in a day or two.

"Is Miss Staunton at home?" he inquired.

"She is, sir," was the reply, "but is not well this morning, and has declined seeing visitors to-day."

"Not dangerously ill, I hope. Present, with this card, my regrets and compliments to her," said Everett, and he left the house dispirited and undecided.

When he reached home he found a second letter that came to him by post from Mr. Lincoln, urging still more strongly that he should accept his offer, and come to Florence without delay.

Everett sent a messenger to Hollygrove with the letter from his father, and addressed one himself to Mr. Staunton, in which he begged that he would command him in any way in which it would be in his power to serve him.

The letters from Florence he sent to Mary on the next morning, and in the same envelope enclosed the following note:

"My Dear Miss Staunton,—

"I know how much you will be pained by the sad news this letter contains, which I received yesterday from Florence, and I regret that *I* should be forced to be the bearer of any thing disagreeable to you.

"I called yesterday to see you, but was deprived of what I long desired, an interview with you, which I trust would lead to a better understanding between us.

"I have decided to go to Florence, and will leave reluctantly, if I must do so without saying adieu to one who must allow me the privilege of considering myself—if no more—her sincere and devoted friend.

"EVERETT ROOT."

CHAPTER XXXI.

It was a rule in Lady Howard's house, that in her absence all letters received from the postman must be left in her boudoir until she distributed them.

The letter addressed to Mary from Everett, was left, with several others, on Lady Howard's writing-table.

Mary's sickness proved to be a nervous attack, which a day's quiet and repose removed, although it left her debilitated, and unable to overcome her depression of spirits.

The morning was fine, and Lady Howard insisted that Mary should accept an invitation to ride out with Mr. Lazarus, who had called for her in a splendid barouche drawn by richly caparisoned horses, and attended by servants in handsome livery.

"I am sure the ride on this fine morning has quite restored you, my dear Mary," said Lady Howard, receiving her on her return, and desiring Mr. Lazarus to come in and remain to lunch.

The old gentleman required but little urging. He laughed, and talked, and capered around the drawing-room like a boy, while the maid unclasped Mary's ermine cloak, and declared she had not seen so bright a color in the young lady's cheek since she came to London.

Lady Howard drew from her pocket a letter for Mary, which had come the day previously, and tossed it playfully into her lap, hoping to put her in a better humor than she then seemed.

"Excuse me, Lady Howard, while I read my letters," said Mary, rising and leaving the room.

"The disagreeable creature, I hate him," she soliloquized. "I'll die before I will marry *him*."

Reaching her room she threw herself into an arm-chair, and broke the seal of the letter which was directed in Everett's handwriting. Mary thought it expressed more interest in her than she had supposed he felt. Why was she so happy? Why did she dwell on every word in that short note, and long to press it to her heart?

After reading and re-reading every line several times, she placed it in her bosom, and opened the one inclosed, that had come from Florence. The bright color soon left her cheek, and her eyes seemed fixed upon its contents. Her breathing grew rapid and oppressed, and the letter fell from her hands upon the floor. She remained some time in deep thought, forgetful of every thing around her, and then she tried to recall the time when she had left the parlor. How long she remained in the room, she could not tell. The words in Mr. Lincoln's letter: "*Her suffering is intense*," seemed to obliterate all other impressions.

Making a powerful effort she aroused herself. Throwing open the window, she stood before it several moments. The cold breeze upon her temples restored her to a consciousness of the necessity of hiding her feelings from Lady Howard. "Everett would take her place by Alice's side," she thought, "and that now rendered it impossible for her to go to Florence. Well,

she deserved it; why had she deferred it? For what had she remained in London, but to be wearied with its dissipation, and find the happiness it had promised unreal?" "But had I gone," she said aloud, "I could not have seen dear Eva. Well, I am satisfied that it is best as it is. Would that I could be reconciled. I must arouse myself, and conceal my troubles."

Poor Mary's heart was nearly breaking with its pent-up griefs, but she closed her eyes a moment, and prayed for strength, and then returned to the drawing-room with an assumed smile, that illy corresponded with the excited flush and discontented look with which she had left it. The quick eye of Lady Howard detected the want of brilliancy in her eye, and the palor of her cheek, and she resolved in her own mind to look to it.

"My dear Lady Howard," whispered Mr. Lazarus, looking at Mary through his glass, "she is the sweetest morsel of humanity ever within the reach of man. A little coy and hard to please, but the more precious for that. What were gold if found on every hill-side? What a form! what arms! what lips and eyes! I'll have every coxcomb envying me, he! he! he!; and not a word shall they speak to her when I am away; no, not *one;* he! he! I'll give her every t her little heart can wish; she shall have a new gown, and flowers, and pets, and birds of every kind. Her jewels shall be the talk and envy of all London; and her house! her house shall be a paradise of luxury; but she must be mine, *all mine*, Lady Howard; not a glance of her eye, not a word, not a smile, but must be mine, Lady Howard, he! he! he! I'll be jealous, jealous as a lover of twenty."

"Take this chair, my dear," said Lady Howard,

addressing Mary, and making room between herself and Mr. Lazarus. Before Mary had time to take it, some one entered the drawing-room. In a moment she was in her father's arms. He had been a week and more at Hollygrove. His face, always before so bright and cheerful, was now grave; and Mary thought he did not return her affectionate welcome with as much warmth as usual.

"Dear father," said Mary, "I cannot let you go from me again. Promise me that you will not. Indeed I cannot let you go, I have missed you so much."

After the usual greetings had passed, Mr. Staunton said he hoped that Lady Howard and Mr. Lazarus would excuse him, and allow him a few moments with his daughter alone in the library. Lady Howard gracefully bowed assent, and Mary followed her father filled with apprehensions that she would hear sad news from Hollygrove. When they reached the library, Mr. Staunton took Everett's letter from his pocket, opened it, and then folded it again and put it in his pocket without speaking. He rose from the chair he had taken near Mary; walked to the window, and looked out without seeming to be aware of what he was doing.

"My child," said he at length, "I am in great trouble, and do not know how to tell you the cause."

"Is Aunt Edith ill, or has Major Trevalyan died, father? Pray tell me quickly," said Mary, alarmed.

"No, all are well, Mary. I have heard accounts from my affairs in New York, and I fear that before this, the greater part, if not all, of my fortune is lost."

"Is that all?" said Mary, greatly relieved.

"*All!* my child! It involves more than you can understand. What can you do without means, Mary,

to support you? How could you bear privations after the wealth I have lavished on you the past two years?"

Mary remained some time silent. A perplexed expression of countenance was followed by one of deep pain. She sighed, and said in a whisper: "Yes, father, you are right. I *am* a poor, helpless burthen upon you in an hour like this; but still be patient with me. How often I have envied those who were educated and talented; and I have longed for the place they held in the world, that you, dear father, might be proud of me; but now, how ardently I desire these advantages for better reasons. What will I be, if deprived of wealth? What a care I will be to you, father. I am indeed nothing—nothing in an hour like this." Over come by her feelings she could say no more.

It pained Mr. Staunton to see his child so grieved, but it was unavoidable. There was too much truth in what she said, to be denied.

"Here is the letter I have received from my agent in New York. He says that we lose all before he can write again, or we gain vastly if we can keep our heads above water. It may not be as bad as I anticipate. My plan is to return immediately to New York, and we must be prepared to meet every event anticipated. I trust we can yet be happy, even though deprived of wealth."

"If you are spared, I can be contented, dear father," said Mary, "and you will see what efforts your poor Mary will make to comfort you."

Lady Howard apologized for interrupting their conversation, but indeed she could no longer remain in the drawing-room, she said, so great was her anxiety to hear what had happened at Hollygrove. Mr. Staunton handed her Everett's letter, which she read

with staring eyes of wonder, and exclamations of "*dreadful!—this is most dreadful!*" Lady Howard could not have sympathized so deeply with her friends in any other affliction, for what was the loss of friends compared with the loss of fortune? Nothing, in her estimation.

"Everett is a noble fellow," said Mr. Staunton; "how kindly, how generously he has acted. I must go to his lodgings, and see if I can learn further particulars of the state of affairs in New York. The President of our Company has been a defaulter; an incredible amount of money has been squandered, and has ruined thousands. This was the commencement of the panic. God only knows where it will stop, Doctor Root says in his letter."

When Mr. Staunton left the house, Lady Howard and Mary returned to the drawing-room, where they found Mr. Lazarus dozing. The air of the morning had soothed him into *sweet* dreams of his charming violet; dreams which he related to Mary with comments and innuendoes. Every word he uttered, increased the dislike Mary felt for him, although the vain old man really fancied he was rendering himself irresistible. Taking a ruby and diamond ring from a case, he caught Mary's hand, and endeavored to force it upon her finger. She resisted all entreaties to accept it, and requested that Mr. Lazarus should at once cease his love-making; for indeed she could not permit it longer. Visitors were announced, and relieved Mary from her embarrassing dilemma.

The drawing-room was filled with company from that time till a late hour at night, and Mary took part in the song and dance so long as it was required of her to do so, and retired late to her own room to commune

with her heart as it was, and not as it appeared to the world. Winny, her maid, had assisted her to undress, and had arranged every thing comfortably for the night. Her last act before leaving the room was to fill a vase with fresh water for a bouquet of rare flowers that were drooping for the want of it.

"Take that bouquet from my room, Winny," said Mary, "its odor is suffocating me."

"Dear me, miss, is it these beautiful flowers that the gentleman sent you, you would destroy?"

"Yes, Winny, throw them out the window. I do not fancy them."

Winny obeyed, and while she was in the act of doing so, Lady Howard entered, and looked displeased. She desired the maid to leave the room. Seating herself near the bedside, she said, Mary must listen to her, and not reply until she had heard all she had to say.

"You see, Mary," she began, "dreadful misfortunes threaten you. To you, who are young and regardless of the world's praise or scorn, it is a matter of but little importance; but your father, Mary, your father is too far advanced in life, to accumulate again the fortune which a few hours may have swept away. He will sink under this trial, I fear. His heart and pride are centred in you. His ambition is to see you in an elevated position in society. What can exceed his mortification when he finds you poor, despised, and trampled under the feet of people, for whom you and he can have no respect. How will he endure to see you fawning around them to crave what you will need —their favor? This idea fills me with sorrow and pain. If I can do any thing to prevent it I will not shrink from it. I find I can, Mary, if you will listen favor-

ably to my advice. I must speak my mind freely to you; and you must listen. You will not, you cannot now refuse the wealth Mr. Lazarus offers to lay at your feet." Mary's brow contracted. "Remember if you slight this offer, you refuse comfort, rest, and peace to your father. 'Tis all you *can* do. What more is in your power? You have only to say the word, and to-morrow you may be led to the altar, and from thence to every worldly comfort."

Mary's eyes flashed with indignation at the sacrifice of feeling and principle required of her. She wished she could make Lady Howard understand how her conscience as well as her heart revolted at the idea of being led to the altar, to promise to love and honor one whom God knew she loathed and despised. Lady Howard sat patting her foot on the floor awaiting Mary's reply, and grew impatient at the hesitation and the discontent Mary evinced in her countenance. "Will you marry him?" she asked.

"*I could not,* Lady Howard, except to save my father's life," said Mary, in a clear, calm voice, that showed the strength of her determination.

"It *will* save his life—it would indeed be better that he died than suffer what he will suffer, if you do not," replied Lady Howard; "and can you, his child, dare to lay a burthen upon him which you could so easily remove by one little word of consent? I do not envy you your conscience if you can, but I hope that before to-morrow you will change your mind. I noticed that the letter I handed you this morning was addressed in a strange handwriting. From whom was it, my dear?"

Mary, glad to change the subject, drew the letter from under her pillow, and handed it to Lady Howard,

who read it carefully two or three times. Everett's love for Mary was very evident, and it did not at all tend to soothe her irritation to see this obstacle in the way of the accomplishment of her own plan.

"Very good. A kind letter, my dear," said Lady Howard, returning it to Mary. "Like a letter from a brother. Have you been long acquainted with Dr. Root, Mary?"

"It is more than two years since we first met," said Mary. "He desires to see me before going to Florence. I would like very much to see him alone. I am acquainted with Alice Stanley, the child of whom Mr. Lincoln speaks in his letter to Doctor Root. There is much I desire to say to him about her. If I can be allowed this interview alone, I will not then regret his departure from London."

"It is right that you should have this privilege, and I will see that you are gratified," replied Lady Howard, anxious to win Mary's favor and confidence. "And now, my dear, you must tell me candidly, are you not afraid to encourage this young man's vanity by this meeting? You must remember that he is engaged to Gertrude. Womanly dignity should prevent you from doing any thing that would look like endeavoring to draw his affections from her."

"Heaven forbid that I should ever do so," said Mary. "I promise you, Lady Howard, he shall never accuse me of any thing so base."

"That is my dear love," said Lady Howard, embracing Mary. "Now close your eyes and go to sleep. You must look your prettiest to-morrow. Your poor worshipper sighs to behold you again, and lay his fortune at your feet. I assure you, Mary, I never before witnessed such an instance of unconquerable love at

first sight. Such intense adoration. What sacrifices would not your father make for *you*. *Can* you deny him the comfort it is in your power to give him?"

Mary's lip curled, and a cloud passed over her face that told the good lady how little the young girl cared for her infatuated slave.

Mr. Lazarus' extravagant compliments and familiar attentions had become more annoying and disagreeable than Mary could express by word or look, but Lady Howard assured him on the following day that he had nothing to fear, for she could see he was fast gaining ground. He must remember, however, that "faint heart never won a fair lady."

CHAPTER XXXII.

The servant announced at an early hour on the following morning, that Doctor Root was waiting in the drawing-room, and desired to see Miss Staunton. With all her efforts, the poor girl could not check the quick and nervous throbbing of her heart. Her hand trembled when she extended it to Everett, and she found it impossible to speak in reply to his friendly salutation.

"You will excuse me," she said at length, "if I cannot disguise my feelings. This visit, so long postponed, has affected me more than I could have anticipated. My agitation surprises myself," she added with a half affected laugh.

"To what may I attribute your emotion, Mary? If the note I received from Lady Howard be true, I fear I am not received with favor," said Everett, with deep feeling, and in a low and earnest tone.

Mary's manner was an enigma to Everett. She is the most ingenuous person I ever met, thought he, for surely there is no displeasure in her face, or she must be the most artful coquette. Why these tears?—Recovering herself, and remembering Lady Howard's caution and advice, Mary replied with dignity:

"You must remember, Doctor Root, you have slighted me by your indifference since we parted at

Hollygrove; and you have avoided me and given me cause of offence since you came to London. Is it surprising, then, that I should be unable to conceal my wounded pride? It is foolish and weak, therefore I pray you will let it pass. It is over now. Let us not waste the few moments we have in reproaches. It may be our last meeting."

Everett could not deny the truth of what she had said. He had slighted her, avoided her, but his love had remained unchanged. How could she doubt it?

"Believe me, Mary," he said, "I regret it deeply, and ask forgiveness. I have suffered more than you can have done by this estrangement between us; and, must it continue? I trust not. I must leave to-morrow for Florence, and do not let me leave you with the belief that I have excited in your heart no stronger interest than that of friendship. I have not deserved more from you I confess. But you are generous, and will not deny me the hope that you have not been a stranger to the love I have borne you. Though circumstances may have lately arisen to separate us, I fear forever, will you not allow me the privilege—"

"Everett," said Mary, interrupting him, "dare not to trifle with me in this way. We cannot meet again if you talk to me of love."

"What does this mean, Mary? Keep me no longer in suspense, I beg of you." Everett resolved not to believe she was engaged to another until he could hear it from her own lips.

Mary gathered all her strength, and under the cover of a calm exterior, concealed the disappointment with which her heart was breaking.

"Is it right, is it honorable for one affianced to

another, to speak of love, Everett, except to the chosen one?" she added in a whisper.

Mary spoke with a calmness which the tear in her eye betrayed was forced.

"You are right, Mary, forgive me," he said, rising and walking to the window, where he remained some time unable to control his feelings. He was overcome by the struggle he was making to surrender her to another, to whom, he now believed, she had pledged herself.

"We may still be friends I hope, Miss Staunton," he said, breaking the silence. "You will not deny me the privilege of assuring you that you will never find one who more truly desires your happiness, and who would have—"

"Everett," interrupted Mary, "I have acted contrary to my judgment and to what I had resolved against, before meeting you this morning; and now speak no more on this subject, or I must leave the room. You will soon leave for Florence?"

"To-morrow," he replied.

"Tell Alice Stanley how truly I grieve that I should ever have caused her an unhappy moment. Ask her to forgive Mary Staunton, and to try to love her, although she has no claim upon her love. Say to her that I hoped to go myself to Florence, and see her, and try to give her comfort in her sickness, but *that* dream, like many others, is now over."

Everett was too deeply affected by the total destruction of all his hopes of happiness with Mary, to listen without distraction to any other subject; and therefore seemed not to hear what Mary had said. "My father," she continued, "has received letters from New York which have given him much anxiety of mind, and will oblige us to leave here in one of the next steamers. I

cannot regret saying adieu to London; for my life, since I left dear Hollygrove, has been one of disappointment and sadness. Though I have been surrounded by all that the world can offer, I have found neither pleasure nor peace."

"Did you say you will return to New York in the next steamer?" inquired Everett, arousing himself.

"Yes, my father fears that his fortune has been lost through the carelessness or fraud of those to whom he has intrusted the management of his affairs. If I know my own heart, this loss is not as great a trial to me as many others would be; for I have seen during my short experience here in fashionable life, how little dependence can be placed upon wealth and fortune's promises; and I have resolved to place my happiness in something more stable. Wealth has many advantages and much power; but I now crave other blessings more."

"Mary, you surprise me. Of whom have you learned these lessons?"

Mary related with simplicity how the teachings of her loving, patient father had gradually found their way to her heart, and had excited her ambition to imitate the models he drew for her admiration. She described how the influence of the visit to her good Aunt Edith, had given life and strength to the resolutions she had formed to improve her mind and cultivate better dispositions; and finally how the sufferings, conversion and death of poor Eva, had removed from before her eyes the veil of doubt that had so long kept Heaven and the throne of mercy from her view.

"Her sad fate has taught me that there is but one source of happiness—the path of duty—but one desire that is worthy of our thoughts—Heaven." She then gave a graphic account of Eva's life and death, and of

the singular manner in which she was saved from total destruction, and sheltered from the wild vengeance of Count Von Wollonstadt.

"You are an angel, Mary," exclaimed Everett, falling at her feet. "Can you forgive the part I have acted towards you? I have weakly listened to the base suggestions of that detestable villain, Wallace Humphrey, and neglected you, wronged you."

"I beg of you rise instantly," said Mary. "It is not right for me to permit this, Everett."

"I cannot, till you say you forgive me, Mary. Do not leave me, do not, till you say that I am not contemptible in your sight and unworthy of a thought of kindness. But, dear Mary, pity me, forgive me for loving you, adoring you more than I have ever done."

Everett's fervent and distracted manner agitated while it surprised and alarmed Mary. But making an effort, she blamed herself for having permitted him to say so much. Extricating herself from his grasp she told him in a reproachful tone, and with an air of offended dignity, that his profession of love had wounded her pride. Hastily turning to leave the room, she met Lady Howard and her daughters just entering, accompanied by Mr. Lazarus. He had taken them that morning to a picture-gallery where several fine specimens of the old masters were on exhibition, and would be offered for sale during the coming week. Everett's embarrassment, and the unnatural excitement evident in Mary's face when she passed them, were not lost to the quick observation of Lady Howard, who resolved to read Mary a lecture upon the impropriety of her conduct. But the good lady showed outwardly no displeasure or disturbance of mind, and sat down by Everett on the sofa to joke him about her fascinating little friend,

Gertrude, whom report had given to him for a bride. Everett declined the honor, assuring Lady Howard he would never be so fortunate.

"Why has Miss Staunton left you alone?" inquired Miss Howard, taking her mother's place, who had crossed the room to say a word to Mr. Lazarus. "I presume she preferred not meeting her lover in your presence."

"Her lover! Whom?" inquired Everett.

"The youthful Romeo there," replied the young lady, laughing and looking towards Mr. Lazarus, who had thrown himself into a large arm-chair. "Yes, indeed," she continued, amused by Everett's look of surprise, "yes, mamma tells me that last night Miss Staunton promised her to accept him; and the old man has come this morning to claim her hand. Mamma you know does not believe in love, and has advised Miss Staunton to be prudent and sensible, and prefer a good position for herself and father to poverty. You have heard, I suppose, that Mr. Staunton has lost his fortune. It is wiser no doubt for the girl to marry Mr. Lazarus under the circumstances. It would be folly to do otherwise. He is one of the richest bankers in London. It is all settled that they are to be married immediately. Mamma gives a splendid wedding to the happy groom, and half the girls of our acquaintance will nearly die of envy, depend upon it."

"Does Miss Staunton love Mr. Lazarus?" inquired Everett, regarding the old gentleman, and unable to believe that Mary Staunton could have voluntarily made such a choice.

"Dear me, no! I do not suppose she could love any one who is so ugly, and so much older than she is. But how many people do you meet in the world now

who marry for love? Mamma laughs at me when I talk of such a thing. If the admirer is one who can give me wealth and rank, she expects me to love him, or rather to marry him, if I can."

"Pshaw! Pshaw!" interrupted Uncle Jacob, who had only heard the concluding part of the conversation. Shaking his sides laughing, he gave *his* opinion on the subject. Knowing that his own power lay solely in his bank, he derided the idea of the existence of any charm more potent. "Love? there's no such thing, except the love for beauty or money. I marry for beauty and youth, she for my money, he! he! he! don't I know it? I've lived longer than you, young man. Never trust your wife out of your sight when you get her, unless you have plenty of money. They are all fickle, deceitful little witches, he! he! he! Wouldn't depend on one of them. If you love her, watch her, he! he! he! They are all faithless gipsies, depend upon it, he! he! he!"

Lunch was ready, and Lady Howard desired the servant to ask Miss Staunton to give them the pleasure of her company. Everett declined an invitation to remain, and left the house in a state of mind that rendered him incapable of attending to the business that should have been transacted before his departure for Florence.

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"She is marrying that disagreeable old man to save her father from ruin, and should I blame her?" were the last thoughts that crossed Everett's mind as he left London, feeling that he should never behold one whom he could love, as he had loved Mary Staunton.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A FEW days after the interview with Everett, Mr. Staunton desired Mary to make preparations for their immediate departure from London.

This announcement called forth the most flattering regrets from many of her young friends; and some pretty love sonnets from her numerous admirers. Wallace Humphrey again sought her favor, but in vain, (the loss of her fortune, or the fear of it, had not been mentioned to any one except Everett and Lady Howard's family.)

Uncle Jacob was vexed and astonished by a refusal, but consoled himself with the assurance that there were "pretty creatures enough waiting for his gilded hand." There was no consolation for poor Lady Howard; and to the last moment her reproaches and prophetic denunciations rang in poor Mary's ear. * * * * * *

Mary and her father were again upon the great and mighty deep, and sat side by side on the deck of the noble vessel that was bearing them towards home. After the last glimpse of land had faded from their sight, the wide expanse of waters seemed to offer a peaceful and happy change from the busy life they had left behind; and thoughts of high and holy things came like angels from above to speak peace to their troubled

hearts. Much had occurred to develop and improve Mary's character since she was last upon the ocean's bosom. Then she was a light-hearted, reckless girl, actuated by unrestrained impulse alone, with no regret in her heart for the past, and no thought of care for the future. Now the alternate pallor and flush upon her cheek showed that strong feelings are struggling within her breast. Tears are falling upon the leaves of the open book in her hand; the fixed gaze of her eye shows that her thoughts are far, far away, though they may have been suggested by the beautiful passages she marked with her pencil a few moments since. A stranger stands near her unnoticed, and is enchanted by the earnest and changing expression of her face.

"You have remained too long on deck, my child," said Mr. Staunton, breaking the silence. "It is three hours since we left the shore; I fear you have been too long exposed to this strong breeze."

The stranger hoped to hear the tone of her voice, which he had already imagined must be bewitching; but Mary replied to her father's remark by rising and taking his arm. They walked in silence to the ladies' cabin, and in doing so attracted the attention of several of the passengers, who remarked that they were persons who would be agreeable companions on the voyage. The book which Mary held in her hand fell from her lap when she rose, which neither she nor her father appeared to remark. William Sutherland, the stranger, picked it up; and while reading the name of Mary Staunton on the title-page, a look of surprise and inquiry crossed his face. He turned to the passage which he saw her mark with her pencil, and read the following lines from Coplas de Manrique, as translated by Longfellow:—

"Behold of what delusive worth
The bubbles we pursue on earth,
The shapes we trace,
Amid a world of treachery;
They vanish e'er death shuts the eye,
And leave no trace.

"Time steals them from us—chances strange—
Disastrous accident—and change
That comes to all;
Even in the most exalted state
Relentless sweeps the stroke of fate—
The strongest fall."

"Mary Staunton!" thought William, turning back to the name on the title page. "Miss Staunton! Impossible that this interesting young lady can be the wild gypsy girl of whom my first love, Susan Summers, used to write to me. Impossible!"

While he was turning over the leaves of the book, and the subject in his mind, Mary returned to find the missed volume. He closed the book, bowed gracefully, and handed it to her. Mary politely thanked him, and apologized for her carelessness, but scarcely glanced at the handsome young man before her, whose vanity was not a little piqued by the indifference.

The passengers on board the steamer had before many hours scanned one another pretty freely, and selected in their own minds those whose acquaintance they would desire to cultivate. William Sutherland had already an unmistakable impression that, though now distant and reserved towards him, the society of the dignified beauty that had attracted his attention would form his chief pleasure during the time they must pass together on the ship. It was true she had as yet scarcely deigned him a glance, although he sat by her side at table, and they read that evening by the light of the

same chandelier. While he stood looking at her interesting face and wondering if her heart was still free, an involuntary sigh had come from his heart; why, he knew not; he only knew that since that moment he had but one image in his mind, and that was hers.

The evening of the second day of the voyage was a heavenly one. The moon shone brightly, and seemed to have drawn from the caverns of the deep myriads of sparkling gems to its surface. The wind, which all day had blown freshly, had lulled, and the fine vessel moved on undisturbed through the boundless waste of water. The passengers had mostly gathered on deck, attracted by the beauty of the evening, and were talking in groups here and there. Mary and her father had chosen a retired part of the vessel, where they could enjoy the loveliness of the scene uninterrupted by the gayety of those around them, lighter of heart. William Sutherland had followed them, and without waiting for an introduction, made some remarks upon the enchantment of the night, and the pleasures of a voyage when not annoyed by sea-sickness. Mr. Staunton replied pleasantly, and they were soon discussing topics of business, more particularly the one now uppermost in Mr. Staunton's mind, the embarrassment in the financial affairs of New York. Finding they had mutual friends, all reserve was forgotten, and Mr. Staunton introduced his daughter "Miss Staunton," to —— he paused, "William Sutherland," said the stranger, at the same time extending his hand to Mary.

"William Sutherland," said Mary aloud, unable to conceal her surprise—"of New York?" she inquired. William replied in a tone of pleasantry, "he believed that city claimed the honor of his birth. Are you returning home, Miss Staunton?" he asked.

"If country may be called home," she replied in a sad tone, "I am." After a pause she added, "since my remembrance I have never known the blessings of *a home.* Home! what a sweet word, 'sweet home!' What can compensate for its loss? In vain do we attempt by riches and pleasures to fill the aching void which the loss of a dear home creates."

"Do you not reside in New York with your father, Miss Staunton?" said Mr. Sutherland. "What could be happier than the home which the presence of a fond daughter can give to a father?"

Mary shook her head mournfully, and replied, "When the spirit of a mother has departed, there is no longer on earth a *home* for her family. *She* was its light, its life, and without her there only remains to her husband and children an abiding place in the desert of life."

Mr. Staunton was much affected by Mary's remarks. He had hoped she was not fully conscious of the privation she had sustained in the loss of her mother; but he was mistaken; when her face and manner exteriorly showed little signs of thought or feeling, Mary had many a time stolen unseen to a dark corner at Marvel Hall, and wept bitter tears because she had no mother to love, and to speak kindly to her. And it had sometimes happened that, when coming from her retreat with tears upon her face, her grief had been renewed by Mrs. Marvel reproaching and calling her a sullen, bad girl, for Mrs. Marvel always considered tears a sign of discontent and ill-humor. Mary remained some time silent after her last remark. Mr. Staunton drew Mary's arm within his own, and held her closely to his side, but did not speak, and Mr. Sutherland felt it would be an intrusion to do so. The moon for a moment passed

under a dark cloud, and concealed the sadness of Mary's expression. Then it emerged and seemed to move on majestically in the firmament, leaving far behind the dark spot that had dimmed its light, and so it was with Mary's momentary gloom. She aroused herself, and made a pleasant remark upon t ess she anticipated in again beholding the New W

"Have you been long absent?" inquired Mr. Sutherland.

"It is nearly three years since I left New York. I cannot realize that it is no longer, for I have lived three times three years since then."

"You do not look like such a sage," said William. "Your appearance is so youthful I was surprised to find passages like these marked by you in the book which you left on deck last evening." He drew from his pocket a copy of the lines, and handed them to her. Mary glanced at them.

"Are they not true? Although I am young, my short day has been one of chance and marvellous change."

"Will you permit me, Miss Staunton, to ask if you were at Marvel Hall?"

"I regret to say that the earlier part of my life was spent in that Institution," she replied, with an embarrassment of manner that mortified her exceedingly.

"Were you pleased with the course of instruction pursued by Mrs. Marvel?"

"I was not aware at the time," said Mary, "of the cruel imposition practised upon the children of that establishment. I have no patience when I think of the superficial teaching imparted by half-paid masters, who came to the school and thought only of passing away the ho r assigned them as best they could; never

dreaming of requiring perfect lessons or attention from the class of wild girls, half of whom during recitation hour were engaged in drawing profiles of the teacher, or writing verses to him upon the margin of their books, which he insisted upon seeing.

"*I never remember having received a lesson that would make me strong to do what was right, and avoid what was wrong; nor do I ever remember having received one lesson from Mrs. Marvel or her teachers, upon the presence or love of God.* Indeed, I blush to say that all knowledge of spiritual life I have learned since then by the saddest experience. We were taken to church on Sunday to hear a sermon which our minds and hearts were not prepared to understand or appreciate, and, like our Sunday dress, religion was put away in the closet to be worn only on that day. Indeed, it was a subject avoided in the school, for it seems to me that to speak of Heaven and God, was supposed to require more moral courage than young people of the world possess. Is it not strange that any thing so beautiful, so amiable, so exalted above every thing material, so necessary to our happiness here and hereafter, as religion, should be so neglected, so avoided?"

"It is all too true," said William Sutherland, "my own experience in college life is even worse. Were you acquainted with Miss Summers at Marvel Hall?" he inquired. "A friend of mine wrote to me," he continued, "that she left Marvel Hall on account of illness. Susan was once the object of my youthful admiration! Neglect and time proved to me that my heart was not lost, and the spell was broken."

"I fear," said Mary, "that I have to accuse myself of being the cause of misunderstanding between you."

"It is of little consequence," replied Mr. Sutherland.

"I do not regret the change in my sentiments! It was but a boyish love."

"It must have been a cause of grief to her, however; for I remember how devotedly she loved you," said Mary; "and therefore *I* regret it deeply."

"Do not reproach yourself, Miss Staunton; she forgot her love for me as she would have forgotten a dream. Eighteen months since she married a naval officer whom she met at a ball, and to whom she became engaged after an acquaintance of three weeks. It is time that I should laugh at my folly, I think!"

This news was a great relief to Mary, and she thanked God that one burthen had been removed from her conscience. Her spirits rose; and before the evening was over she interested Mr. Sutherland with an account of her visit to Hollygrove, and the winter passed in London. Her opinions and ideas were original, and her descriptions of life in London were graphic and amusing in the extreme. A fine piano and harp afforded the passengers a great deal of pleasure. Mary sang beautifully, and drew a crowd to the ladies' cabin every evening. Her readiness to do all in her power to make the voyage pleasant, soon made her a general favorite. Mr. Staunton could not participate in their amusements. He was greatly depressed by fears respecting the state of his affairs, and gave himself up to the lowest spirits. Mary tried in vain to turn his mind from the subject of his anxiety, and endeavored to comfort him by her cheerful manner and attention to his wishes. When she saw him disturbed by her conversation, she remained silent hours by his side, and cheerfully, on those occasions, gave up all amusement and pleasure for his sake.

Mr. Sutherland remarked and admired this affectionate thoughtfulness, which kept her from society in

which her father could not take pleasure. It was with difficulty he could gain a small portion of her time. That time was passed in unreserved and pleasant conversation, and was daily anticipated by him with increased happiness. An interest had been excited in the young man's heart, of which Mary little dreamed; and the sound of "Land!" "Land!" came too soon to his ear. A few hours after, they saw the city of New York, with grateful hearts, and before evening a carriage bore them to the hotel which they had left three years before. The remembrance of her debut in the world brought painful recollections to Mary's mind.

Mr. Staunton, Mr. Sutherland, and Mary, entered the hotel with many other strangers, without meeting an acquaintance except the proprietor of the house. Mr. Staunton accompanied Mary to her room and then hastened to the office to inquire for letters which he had directed to be sent here. He returned in half an hour with a joyous countenance.

"Thank God, my child, we are safe," he exclaimed. "My property has not been sacrificed. My dear Mary, I would suffer again all I have endured in the past month to learn the goodness of your heart. Your amiable resignation and your desire to comfort me have given me more happiness than I have experienced in many years; and now tell me, my child, do you forgive my depression?"

The thrill of happiness that swelled Mary's heart was evident, and for a moment she could not reply. The joy produced by her father's approbation, and the sudden news of their good fortune after so many days of anxious fears, she could only express by smiles and tears.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Mr. Staunton passed the following day in calling upon his friends, and did not return until a late hour to the hotel. He found Mary alone in their parlor, but contentedly reading.

"These are fearful times," said he, taking his chair near the table by which Mary was sitting. "It is melancholy to see so many of one's friends in trouble. A dark cloud overshadows the city. Distress has come to thousands of all classes I find. The business part of the town looks as if a desolating and destructive storm had passed over it. Men with haggard countenances pass silently along in deep reverie, and half-starved women with outstretched hands stand at every corner of the street."

"Have any of your friends suffered, father?" inquired Mary, laying aside her book.

"Several," replied Mr. Staunton, "but none with whom you are acquainted, I believe. The failure of one gentleman this week, Mr. Lincoln, young Root's friend, seems to have caused great surprise and sympathy. He was universally beloved. A gentleman, who told me of the occurrence this morning, said that it was a pity to see such a prince in heart deprived of means, for never did the needy or unfortunate knock at his door

in vain. They say he died in Florence the day before the news of his failure reached there. His house, a magnificent one, will be sold at auction to satisfy some pressing claims. I understand that his wife is still living, but hopelessly deprived of her reason. His friends and the public considered him an unmarried man, for he never spoke of his wife except to Doctor Root. He was married in Europe when very young, and the idol of his youth became insane soon after their marriage. He never spoke of her in this country, except to his physician. His niece, Alice Stanley, would have been heiress to his princely estate but for this unexpected failure."

"Alice Stanley!" exclaimed Mary, laying her hand on her father's arm, and leaning heavily upon it. "Did you say, father, that Alice Stanley has lost her fortune by his death?" "Yes," replied her father. "Everett Root went to Florence, but not in time to see Mr. Lincoln. Alice and her father are expected to return home as soon as she will be well enough to travel. Young Everett Root will probably return with them. The air of Italy has not restored the child to health as was anticipated. Doctor Root tells me they fear an affection of the spine; a curvature is already apparent, they think."

"Oh, father! father!" said Mary, bursting into tears, which she had with difficulty restrained; "that beautiful child deformed?" Covering her face with her hands, the poor girl sobbed aloud, and for some time could not reply to Mr. Staunton's entreaties to tell him why she was so distressed. In an agony of sorrow and mortification she told her father that it was *her* cruelty that had been the cause of Alice Stanley's long and painful illness. She related all the distressing circumstances.

"What *can* I do, father?" she said. "The misery I have inflicted on that poor child will kill me. Have I lost your esteem, father? This must shock you; I know it must, but pray, pray try to forgive your unhappy, your unfortunate child," said Mary, falling upon her knees before her father, and bending her head to the very floor. Mr. Staunton was surprised and pained beyond expression, but exercised his usual self-control to conceal from Mary the extent of his surprise and sorrow. He saw how bitterly she repented, and how far from her heart was the commission of such acts now. But, the reparation;—how could that be made? Mr. Staunton had raised Mary, and held her in his arms silently, endeavoring to gain composure and speak calmly. In a trembling voice he whispered, "May God forgive you, my child, I do." Mary remained on her father's neck weeping bitterly, and Mr. Staunton did not attempt to control her. "It is indeed a fearful result of *one* thoughtless act," said Mr. Staunton, in a suppressed tone of sadness, that showed how painfully he shared in Mary's distress. "But we must endeavor to find means by which we can alleviate the pangs of the dreadful affliction under which this poor child must suffer continually." Mr. Staunton remained some time silent, and then with a more hopeful expression, said, "I can purchase Mr. Lincoln's house for you and Alice, Mary, if it is sold at auction, as is now anticipated. Alice must share my fortune with you. It is all I can do. We can never give her just compensation for the wrong you have done her, my child."

"Thank you, thank you, father," said Mary, earnestly grateful for the kind efforts her father was so generously making for Alice; but feeling keenly the justice

of his censure, she could not raise her eyes, and was still weeping from her inmost heart.

"You will love Alice, I am sure you will, father," said Mary, "and call her your *own* daughter. She is far more worthy of your love than I have ever been. I will do all *I* can to make her happy! Happy? How can I expect to give *happiness* to a sufferer such as I have made her for life! Oh! father, dear father, how can I live to witness it!"

Mr. Staunton was touched by Mary's generosity and tenderness towards Alice; and more particularly because it gave evidence of her true sorrow. He endeavored to encourage her to hope that Heaven would yet bless her, and give her the reward of her repentance. They talked long and confidingly. Poor Mary confessed all she could remember of the falsehood, deceit, and waywardness of which she was guilty at Marvel Hall; and described the unloved, unhappy life she led there, which had seemed to foster all the evil dispositions it called forth from her nature. The pain which the remembrance of these acts of her childhood had caused her since her conscience had been awakened, she told with a deep and simple feeling that affected her father to tears.

"I have often wished, dear father," she said, "to tell you these trials of my heart, but had not courage. I feared you could not love me so well after hearing them. When you came for me at Marvel Hall (that blessed day!) I saw instantly that you were disappointed; and I felt painfully humiliated; for I could see how very, very far below what you had expected me to be you had found me. But no words can ever express the feelings of my heart, when you first held my hand in

yours, and called me your '*dear* Mary.' I could have screamed for joy. I felt like it. 'Some one loves me,' I thought, and it seemed to me it was almost too much joy to last. But I did not say a word, and held down my head to hide my tears, of which I was ashamed. They fell on my dear mother's face in the miniature we were looking at. Do you remember it, father? You looked into my eyes so mournfully and yet so kindly, I could have died with joy, I was so very happy; and yet I do not believe that you knew how my rough heart responded to the fond clasp of your hand that night." Mary caught her father's hand, and in a rapture of gratitude, pressed it to her lips again and again; and thanked him as many times over for the support he had given her, and the patience with which he had borne her many, many faults. "I know, father," she continued, "that I have in days past given you reason to think me heartless—worthless—but I have been trying, dear father, and will, I hope, forever try to lead a better life."

"My dear child," replied Mr. Staunton, "with these resolutions, and your strong will to carry them out, you have little to fear, and I have much to hope. But remember there is but *One* who gives us strength. We are all weak, powerless, without *His* supporting arm. But, like the beloved Apostle, rest upon His bosom, my child, in all confidence and love; and though He may require great trials of you, great sacrifices, He will sustain you. I thank GOD, Mary, that you have had courage to tell me all that afflicts you, and I regret that you did not do so long since. Poor child," he said, imprinting a kiss of warm paternal love on her cheek, "it has been a heavy burthen to struggle under alone!"

It was late before they retired, and neither father nor child reposed undisturbedly that night. "The future, the trying future, may I meet it as I ought," Mary involuntarily murmured aloud, while her eyes were closing in sleep.

CHAPTER XXXV.

A FEW weeks after the events related in the preceding chapter, Mrs. Saunders entered her house, full of excitement. "Well, wonders will never cease!" said the good woman, throwing off her bonnet and shawl, and laying them upon a dusty sofa in the dining-room. An uncomfortable dinner had been waiting for her return, until Mr. Saunders had lost his small store of patience; and Isabella, who had not been favored with lunch, was almost fainting from exhaustion.

"I have called upon Mrs. Flemming this morning, and there I found Miss Hathaway and two or three of the neighbors talking over Mr. Porter's failure," said Mrs. Saunders. "He has had to sell his carriage; and Mrs. Porter will no longer wonder how Mrs. Saunders can walk so much; ha! ha! ha! The house opposite, they say, will go next, and Mrs. Fairface and her daughters will not object to call on me, perhaps, when their feathers are plucked! I never saw such peacocks in my life. Miss Hathaway says Mrs. Fairface has taken to her bed with a nervous fever, and is half crazy. But this is not the best, or rather strongest news I heard to-day, and you will say, 'wonders will never cease,' when I tell you what has come to pass." Here the good woman paused to take breath, and then ordered the servant to bring up the dinner at once.

"Well, what do you suppose has happened up town?" she inquired.

"What?" answered Mr. Saunders, rather gruffly, not yet restored to his usual spirits, which had never been known to reach "summer heat."

"Guess," replied Mrs. Saunders, while taking off her green glasses and wiping them. No one present tried to guess. They were hungry, and the dinner was cold. No heart warmed to the subject sufficiently to take any interest in it. Mr. Saunders endeavored to carve the leg of mutton before him, that was burned to a crisp, and blamed the slovenly servant-girl in waiting, who slid out of the room to avoid a scolding, but soon hurried back to hear the news.

"Well," said Mrs. Saunders, "Mr. Lincoln's house and furniture has been sold at auction, and the purchaser has taken possession of it; and now, who do you think he is?" Isabella was the only one present whom the news interested. She dared not show her feeling, and endeavored to appear indifferent. "Mr. Lincoln, that rich man's house sold! Vanity of vanities, all is vanity! And who do you suppose is the purchaser?" repeated Mrs. Saunders. "*Mr. Staunton.* He has returned from Europe, and they say no one who saw his daughter when she left Marvel Hall would know Mary Staunton now! She has changed mightily. Mrs. Fanning saw her in the new house, and told Miss Smith all about it, and Miss Smith says she is very handsome, dresses beautifully, and is mighty agreeable. Think of her being mistress of that palace, and I must be contented in this miserable place. Wonders will never cease; this is an age of miracles! who can deny it?"

Isabella had been accustomed to perfect silence at

table, and therefore gave no opinion on the subject except what her countenance expressed.

"Miss Sinclair!" said Mrs. Saunders, "one would think some good or bad fortune had fallen at your door. What can ail you?"

I am truly glad to hear of Mary's improvement and happiness," replied Isabella.

"I suppose she'll have enough people toting after her, now she is the mistress of such a house," said Mrs. Saunders. "Well, she needed a change, mercy knows, for from all the awkward girls I ever saw, she could take the prize the day she came to —— hotel, and sat down opposite to me at dinner. I am going up to see her this afternoon, and if you like you can go with me. I should think there would be no harm in your going. To be sure you are in a very different position now from hers, and you can't expect to go into fashionable society; but I do not see the harm of calling upon an old school-mate. If she does not like it, she will not ask you to come again; that's easy enough."

Isabella's face crimsoned, and she asked to be excused from the table.

Scarcely had she closed her door, before Mrs. Saunders shrieked at the top of her voice while standing at the foot of the stairs, "Come! Come! If you are going with me, Isabella, you must be quick. Mr. Saunders can't be kept waiting. He's losing a mighty deal of his time."

Isabella asked Mrs. Saunders to give her love to Mary, and say she would call to see her another time.

"That is just as well, for all I know," replied the lady. "Maggy was ill-tempered to-day, and ought to be kept in an extra hour at her studies. I wish you to

stay with her, and see that she does not get into any mischief."

Mr. and Mrs. Saunders left the house, and Isabella returned to her room. She sat down by the table to finish a letter to her uncle; but thought upon the strange changes of life, blotted her paper with tears, and laid her letter aside. "Mary Staunton living in Mr. Lincoln's house! and my good friend gone, forever gone!" Isabella rested her head upon her hand. "My companions," she thought, "at Marvel Hall would not believe that I must now bear to be a despised governess, trampled under the feet of a heartless woman, whom I know to be greatly my inferior." "What is the matter? Miss Bella, don't cry," said a little curly-headed urchin, trying to pull Isabella's arm from the table. "Here, take a piece of my candy, and I'll run and get more from mother's drawer." "No, Charley," said Isabella, "I was naughty to cry; but you see I have wiped my eyes, and mean to be good; say your letters now."

Mrs. Saunders did not return until late, and Maggy atoned for her misconduct by annoying Isabella as much as it was possible to do; and then went to bed crying and complaining bitterly of her mother's cruelty.

The next morning, at the breakfast-table, Mrs. Saunders expressed her surprise that a man so rich as Mr. Lincoln *could* have failed. The grandeur in which the Stauntons now lived, and the wonderful change going abroad had wrought in Mary, were also discussed.

"I never saw any one more surprised than she was, when she heard that you, Isabella Sinclair, was in my employment," said the lady, "and I believe she means to call upon you. I am sure she will ask for you when she calls on *me*."

Isabella replied that she intended to go and see Mary without waiting for the ceremony of a call from her.

"Well, all I can say is, you are very foolish," said Mrs. Saunders, in a sneering tone of voice. "People in *your* situation should be careful never to make the first advances to those above them."

"I do not consider Mary Staunton above me," replied Isabella, with spirit unusual to her.

"If *you* do not, the *world* does; only yesterday I was taken to task for having my governess at table and in the parlor in the evening when I had company. Of course I didn't admit I was wrong. I only mention the circumstance to show that a woman who earns her bread is looked down upon, and you, nor I, nor no one else, can change men and manners. I advise you to wait until Miss Staunton calls upon *you*. I saw several carriages before the door when I got there, and only Mr. Saunders was with me, I would not myself have had courage to go in. You *must* know how these people would look down upon you. It is something to live in a fine house, after all. I remember when Miss Staunton was nobody—worse than nobody. But she received her visitors yesterday like a lady of the world, I assure you, and Mr. Staunton, her father, looked right proud of her."

Notwithstanding the advice of Mrs. Saunders, on the following morning Isabella gave Maggy her lessons to study, and then put on her bonnet and went to —— square, to call upon Mary. Her hand trembled when she rang the bell, for painful recollections of her last visit to Alice crowded upon her. Joe opened the door, and for an instant stared when he saw Isabella. He then dropped his long arms by his side, and remained

a moment with his mouth open without uttering a sound. After an effort, which produced a twitching, and winking, and opening, and shutting of his eyes, he stammered out—"Oh—Miss Isabella—the masther—Mr. Lincoln—is not here any more—Mr. Lincoln's dead—boo—hoo—hoo—and we have a new masther and young misthress here now—I can't feel natural like to 'em yet, Miss."

"Yes, Joe," replied Isabella, affected by the poor boy's grief (big tears were rolling down his rough cheeks,) "I have heard the sad news. Mr. Staunton will be very kind to you, Joe! Is Miss Staunton at home?"

Joe could not, from a choking sensation, articulate a reply in words distinctly, but nodded his head. He opened the drawing-room door, placed a chair in front of the grate, and bowed to Miss Sinclair to be seated. Isabella drew a card from her card case, and handed it to him, with which he disappeared. When last Isabella called to bid Alice adieu, the house was filled with friends. It was now silent. The light tread of the servants was all she could hear. Mr. Staunton had gone out on business, and Mary was studying in the library. With a depressed heart she looked around the room. The furniture was arranged as when the house was occupied by Mr. Lincoln, but it seemed to her, that since his good and cheerful spirit had departed, all light and happiness must have fled. It was sad to think how soon new associations would be impressed upon the mementoes he had left behind him. How soon his place would be filled, and his name remembered but as a dream.

Mary's entrance interrupted these reflections. With one bound she sprang into Isabella's arms, and gave her an embrace that nearly took away her breath.

"Don't fear me, Bella, I am not quite the bear I used to be at Marvel Hall," she said laughing. Isabella returned the salutation affectionately. She could scarcely realize that the interesting girl now before her was her old school-mate, once so coarse and ill-mannered.

"Take off your bonnet, you must make me a long visit. I am very glad to see you. I am lonely enough here in this large house, Isabella."

"You are not aware, Mary, that my time is no longer my own. I must return very soon. Mrs. Saunders is very particular, and will not allow an hour of *her* time lost, although I must say she often trespasses upon mine."

"Oh yes, I remember, she told me you were with her. I was pained, dear Isabella, to hear that you have suffered so much. But you are so good I am sure you are happier than I am, with all the comforts I have around me. Indeed, Isabella, I envy every one who has had advantages of which I have been deprived. I know it is wrong; but with all my exertions, I have not yet been able to overcome this feeling. I am now studying very hard, but can never retrieve the time I lost. Mrs. Saunders told me she had heard remarks of pity made upon my want of education. I was very unhappy after she left our house yesterday. If I believe her, there is very little sincerity in the world."

"Don't believe it," said Isabella, "she judges from her own heart, I fear. There are many, very many good people in the world—those who act disinterestedly, and have no envy."

"I know you are one of those, dear Bella," said Mary, embracing her, "and you must be my dear friend and adviser. Let us go to my room. I am afraid we

will be disturbed by visitors here. You have no idea of the constant rush of company I have. I have a great deal to tell you of all I have seen since I left the Hall; and you must tell me where you have been, and all you intend to do, Bella."

Mary led the way to the red room and closed the door. Isabella sat down on the sofa, and it was some time before she could control her feelings, and give an account of the last visit she had paid to Alice, and of their first meeting.

"What a good man Mr. Lincoln must have been," said Mary, affected by Isabella's touching recital of his kindness to her. "Not a day has passed since we came to this house, without those coming to see us whom he has benefited, and desiring to know if we could give any particulars of his death. They speak of him as you do, Bella, with tears, and bless him again and again."

"I would rather," said Isabella, "be enshrined, as he is, in the hearts of the afflicted whom it has been in his power to aid, than have my name engraven on the costliest monument erected by mere worldly fame."

"How wise you have grown, Isabella, you used not to talk so sensibly."

Isabella smiled and tried to be cheerful. Mary gave an account of her journeyings, and made Isabella laugh over some of her adventures.

Joe interrupted the conversation, which had been a source of so much happiness to both, and presented Dr. Blossom's card on a small silver tray, and, bowing respectfully, retired.

The sight of this card brought the doctor's peculiarities to Mary's mind, and amused her. "Is it possible," said she, "that the good doctor is not yet settled quietly

with a wife by his side? You must go with me to the parlor, Bella, to see him, I cannot endure his pomposity alone."

"Pray excuse me. I have already remained an hour too long. I must go home directly. Even now I may look for a cloud upon Mrs. Saunders' brow for a week to come. This act of delinquency will not easily be forgiven."

"When will you come again? Do say soon, you do not know how much happiness your society affords me," said Mary. Isabella promised to return as soon as she could dare to do so, after her present visit would be forgotten by her selfish employer.

Dr. Blossom had grown three years older, and three years colder and more artificial since Mary last saw him. His moustache had lengthened, and consequently required more care to put a fine point upon it! When Mary entered the drawing-room he rose to meet her, and taking her hand familiarly led her to a chair near his own.

"Can it be possible that I see before me my old patient, Miss Staunton? Is this the delicate flower that so many years blushed unseen, wasting its sweetness on the desert air?"

"I do not understand you, Doctor Blossom," said Mary, in a reserved tone.

"Pardon me, you must allow me to extol the liberality with which fortune has favored you since last we met. She has tinged your cheek with the blush of the fragrant rose, and painted your rosebud lips with love's carnation. Indeed I do not flatter. You are angelic, Miss Staunton."

"Pray, Doctor, reserve your compliments for those who like them."

"Compliments, Miss Staunton! could you call the day night, or its glorious orb darkness? You have risen like a beautiful star in the firmament, to shed light upon the pathway of a weary traveller, and guide him to a haven of happiness—you are like a precious pearl that has been brought from the bottom of the ocean—or a sweet spring flower that has sprung from a mossy bed, which till yesterday the snows imbedded in ice."

"Really, Doctor Blossom, you would embarrass me, were you less extravagant. The extreme of your gallantry borders upon irony, and I must therefore consider your remarks as an imputation upon my good sense," said Mary, laughing.

Other visitors were announced and interrupted the doctor's "flow of soul," which was far from being "a feast of reason."

"Ah, my dear Mary," exclaimed Mrs. Marvel, sailing into the room with a sweep of importance, and filling the air with perfume and the rustling of a heavy silk.

"My dear Mary," she repeated, clasping her old pupil to her immense figure, for heart, alas, was not there; then holding her at arms' length to scrutinize her, she exclaimed in a loud, unlady-like voice:

"Do I live to behold the fruit of my labors? My child, how abundant has been the harvest! When did you arrive, my dear? Only yesterday I heard you were in town. What a magnificent house you have. 'Pon my soul, it is fit for a queen! Are these statues marble?" she inquired, going from one to another, and handling every thing within her reach. It is exquisitely furnished. How lofty the ceilings are. Magnificently frescoed. Mrs. Marvel flung herself upon a

sofa, and declared there was nothing in Europe to equal this house; and for the first time she noticed Doctor Blossom. "Ah! Doctor, is that you? Three years abroad have made great changes in our young friend!"

"Youth! budding youth is a season of loveliness, madam," said the doctor.

"Did I meet Isabella Sinclair on my way? Has she been here?" inquired Mrs. Marvel.

"Yes, she left a few moments after Doctor Blossom came," said Mary, who found it difficult to reply with any kindliness of spirit, for she could hardly control the utter contempt with which she regarded the characters before her.

"Well, Miss Staunton, I do not know that you can allow her name on your list of friends now. Isabella is a fine girl; one of my best pupils; but society, society, my dear, is arbitrary. I do not know how the world would receive your inviting her to the parties I hear you intend giving. It is my impression, though, it would injure you very much, and might keep away some of your most fashionable acquaintances. The most disagreeable feature of these kind of friends is, that they are mortally offended if they hear of your having even a sociable to which they have not been invited. Isabella is pretty and interesting, and would be likely to attract the most desirable of your gentlemen acquaintances, and at the close of the evening only imagine her giving them her residence, and letting out that she is a governess at Mrs. Saunders' —— street! These are the mortifying points connected with those acquaintances. Upon the whole, my advice to you is, to gradually drop Isabella. You must sustain your own position. You can't expect to rise with such appendages to your wings."

Mrs. Marvel was pleased with the metaphorical flight her fancy had taken, and laughed immoderately at her own wit, swaying from side to side like a ship at sea.

Mary felt irritated. She had not asked her advice, nor did she intend to be guided by it; but was prevented from expressing her opinion of it, by the entrance of more company. Miss Jones, accompanied by the renowned Mr. Snell, the handsome Mrs. Williams and her daughters, and a blooming young friend from the country, came to pay a morning call. Mrs. Marvel bade good morning. Carriages were before the door with new comers, and their servants in livery stepped aside to allow Mrs. Marvel and the doctor to pass.

Mrs. Marvel puffed and swelled with self-complacency, when she left the fine mansion and made her way to her carriage, delighted that she had enrolled herself on the list of fashionable visitors at the house of Mr. Staunton. "Mary was a belle and a famed heiress, whose acquaintance all Lion Hunters were proud to seek," she remarked to the doctor, who handed Mrs. Marvel into her carriage, and took a seat by her side.

Miss Jones was a silent, pretty, simpering blonde, who held her card case and embroidered handkerchief with the precision of a wax figure. She seldom put her pretty mouth out of shape by making more than a quiet remark, for she studied repose. It was more distingué, and suited her style of form and face, her mamma told her. Some malicious maidens of her acquaintance had insinuated that Miss Jones' silence was a shield for her ignorance; but Mr. Snell indignantly repelled such an idea. He was fond of talking, and dovetailed one story into another so dexterously, that few

listeners could tell where one began and the other ended. Miss Jones listened and smiled so long as he would favor her with his conversation, for which patience he repaid her by assuring her that she was very suggestive.

Mrs. Williams' whole mind was absorbed in the momentous idea of bringing out her daughters in society, in order to secure advantageous marriages for them. She would call upon Miss Staunton. There was no doubt but many attractive young gentlemen would attend the balls and parties given by Mr. Staunton; and her charming daughters, Isidora and Euphemia *must* be Mary's bosom friends. They gave Mary their confidence, sacred confidence, on the morning of their first call, and promised from that hour they would look upon her as one in whom they might confide. Miss Jones soon left because it was not fashionable to make long calls. Mrs. Williams and her daughters expressed their delight that she was gone, and drew their chairs close around Mary, resolving to enjoy a good gossip. Mrs. Williams told Mary all the attentions Isidora had received from distinguished young men, the bouquets that were tied to the door-bell for Euphemia were exquisite, and the eye-glasses that were levelled at both, every night they attended the opera, was dreadfully annoying. Indeed, so much attention was quite vexatious.

"Did you notice the new bonnets the Daileys appeared in on Sunday?" said Euphemia. "Think of Emma Dailey in a white lace hat and violet flowers, with such a complexion as hers!"

"That was not as bad as Lucy Ellory in pea green, and she as pale as a statue. I do think that girl is the vainest creature I ever saw," said Mrs. Williams.

"By the way, Miss Staunton, I understand from Mrs. Saunders that you met Eva Ellory in Europe, and found her a most depraved, low character." Drawing her chair still nearer to Mary, and settling herself comfortably, she continued: "Pray tell me all about it. Mrs. Saunders, I always thought, had something to do with that woman's fate, for if the story I heard was true, it was her *synonimous* letter to Frank Ellory, that drove her away from home."

"Anonymous, you mean, mother," said Isidora, in an angry whisper.

"Yes, I should have said *anonymus* of course, Isidora; don't you suppose I knew better? But I sometimes speak at random and get confused."

"It is a long and painful story to relate," said Mary, "and I prefer not speaking on the subject. I must agree with you, that Mrs. Saunders will have much to atone for. Her mischief-making meddling caused a great deal of trouble."

"She is a very old friend of mine," said Mrs. Williams, "but I can see her faults for all that. I think she has the most disagreeable tongue of any woman living! I do despise a slanderer, and she never leaves a person's character worth a farthing, after she has become acquainted with them; and there is Mrs. Brown across the way; she is another. That woman will die of envy because you can dress better than her daughter; and the next time I meet her I will hear enough of your mismanagement, depend upon it. I declare, there come Doctor and Mrs. Root. Come, girls, we must go. My dear Mary, I would admire to have you come *very* often to see us. Do, pray, be more sociable. You have a love of a house. I hope my girls will never marry until they—"

"Can marry such a house!" simpered Isidora, interrupting her mother. These ladies, with whom Mary had by this time become wearied, said "good morning," and Doctor and Mrs. Root entered the drawing-room.

Mary soon felt the happy influence of their presence. Her spirits rose in proportion as it had been depressed by the insignificant, though pretentious people with whom she had been bored during the past hour.

"You are quite happy now, I trust," said Mrs. Root. "The duties which you have assumed as mistress of this beautiful home, must give you enough to think of. The useful employment of your time is a sure barrier against any thing like ennui. Your society must give your father a happiness he has never felt before."

"I am yet but a novice in housekeeping," said Mary, "and I fancy Miss Betsey, the housekeeper, does not consider my orders very orthodox. She raises her eyes and hands in expostulation very often. However, I settle the difficulty by telling her it is sufficient that I desire it. I am very sure I make great blunders. I order the carriage out on rainy evenings, which John calls unseasonable hours, unheard of imprudence, and cruelty to the horses. These coachmen assume a great deal of dignity I find. I desired John one morning to go to the store and make some purchases which the cook required. I found I infringed upon his dignity seriously! He drew himself up, rolled his eyes, and twitched the corners of his shirt collar—put his hand to his chin and shook his head, slowly saying: 'Miss Mary, I am too knowledgeable not to know my true position in this 'ere family, and the proper dignity of my perfession. I never engaged for messages, or 'spected a lady like you would ascend to ask me to be

a foot-boy. It's not becoming or spectable for me to do it, and I wasn't brought up with Massa Lincoln as not to keep my place, Miss Mary. That is Joe's business, Miss.'

"'You are right, John,' said I, 'you were engaged as coachman only. Bring the carriage to the door, and take Joe to the furnishing store.' The negro stretched his mouth from ear to ear and ran away. 'I'se sold fair and square, Miss Mary,' I heard in the distance, 'I'll go, missus.'"

The doctor and Mrs. Root were very much amused at this expedient. Mary related some amusing mistakes she had made, but which she corrected speedily.

A tempting lunch was prepared in the dining-room, to which Mary invited her friends. They were scarcely seated before Mr. Staunton joined them, and gave a warm salutation of welcome to the doctor and his good lady. He inquired when they had heard from their son Everett.

"We received letters by the last steamer," said the doctor, "and are hourly expecting his arrival. He comes in company with Mr. Stanley and his daughter Alice. The poor child returns home feeble and disappointed, and she will find sad changes in her old home. I understand that Mr. Stanley has concealed from her the loss of his fortune; the death of her uncle affected her so seriously they kept all other trials from her."

"I am very glad he has done so," said Mary. "It is my wish that she should live with us. Father has consented to adopt Alice as his child, should her father consent. I long to have a sister whom I can love. I am sure Alice will be happier with us in her uncle's house than in any other place. She must not be told that her uncle did not leave her independent. I will do all I can to make her happy."

"...generosity is truly noble, Mary," said Mrs. ... bestowed upon a worthy object. The poor ...as been a patient sufferer. She is a charming ...creature. Everett's heart was won by her sweet ...complaining disposition on the voyage out, and ... his letters home with anecdotes of her heroism. ...ays she is too angelic for this cold world. The ... loves Everett with perfect devotion."

The quick pulsation of Mary's heart oppressed her ...athing while Mrs. Root was speaking. Why should she feel jealous of a *child's* love for Everett? That she did so she could not deny. "Is not Everett engaged to Gertrude? I will stifle this feeling. If he were not, it would be ungenerous indeed to wish to rob Alice of such a heart as Everett's," thought Mary. "If she has gained it, it shall be hers. I have left her but little happiness. That little I will not take from her though I die in the effort." Mary looked sick and troubled, but no one present suspected that a bitter drop had that moment been mingled in her cup.

"Alice shall share my fortune equally with Mary," said Mr. Staunton. "It is Mary's wish that she should be treated in every way like a sister, and I approve of this desire. The sacrifices she will make for this poor child will bring their own reward."

"I do not feel well, dear father," said Mary, holding her hand to her head. "I believe I must ask you to excuse me. Please allow me to go to my room alone."

"You are very ill, my dear," said Mr. Staunton, alarmed by Mary's appearance.

"I am not very ill, I assure you. Do not be alarmed, father. I will be quite well soon. Please remain with Doctor and Mrs. Root. Indeed Mrs. Root I cannot let you leave the table. I prefer being alone a few

moments Hepsey, you need not come. I will soon return to the dining-room."

After Mary had left, Doctor Root spoke much in her praise, and congratulated Mr. Staunton upon the happiness he must enjoy with such a child. Mary soon rejoined them, and it was arranged that Mr. Staunton should meet Alice and her father and bring them from the vessel directly to Mr. Staunton's house; and that Mr. Stanley should remain with his daughter until her health should be sufficiently restored to enable him to leave her without anxiety.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

"Please, Miss Mary, tell me when Miss Alice will come," said Hepsey. "I've put the fresh flowers in the vases every morning a week past in her room. Old David grumbles like all de woes when I goes to the green-house. Says I, yesterday, Hepsey don't think on asking any more flowers of David to shut up alone in the room. Wait till Miss Alice comes. The dear creature, how many went away with her; there was massa, old Massa Lincoln," Hepsey paused, took up her check apron and wiped her eyes. "Old massa, young doctor, and the nurse; and laws, missus, how lone like she's coming home. There wasn't any thing in this house good enough, massa thought, for that poor dear creature; and the Lord help us Missus Mary, who'd athought she could live after Massa Lincoln had gone to glory?"

While Hepsey was speaking, Mary was ordering some changes made in the arrangement of the furniture in Alice's room, and constantly interrupted her conversation. The portrait of the good old man hung upon the wall, and his eyes seemed to follow Mary approvingly in her work of love. She ran to her own room and brought some beautifully bound and illustrated books, and laid them upon the table after writing Alice's name upon the first page.

Isabella had promised to come and remain several days. Mary expected her that evening, and stood in the recess of one of the drawing-room windows watching for her coming. Her mind was dwelling upon the mysterious changes that had placed her in so high a position, and had doomed poor Isabella to a home barren as Mrs. Saunders' seemed to be of all comforts.

William Sutherland had called to see Mary almost every day since her return from Europe. An acquaintance made at sea, if agreeable, is usually one which in a few days ripens into frendship. In his case it had come to the full maturity of love. He entered the drawing-room unseen, and stood at a little distance admiring Mary. She was startled by a slight cough, and inquired how long he had been in the room.

"I hope I have not intruded upon your thoughts, if they were more agreeable to you than my presence, Miss Staunton."

"No, indeed," replied Mary, laughing. "I am glad to see you; you have driven that disagreeable woman in green spectacles out of my mind. It is no flattery to say that your presence is more agreeable than thoughts of her."

William Sutherland had resolved that day to avow his love, fearing that a delay might lessen his chances of success. There were other competitors entering the field. He had carefully digested the manner of a proposal, and had mapped out in his mind half-a-dozen plans of action. To declare his love must be the starting point; he must then apologize for so hasty an avowal of it, or she might doubt his sincerity. With as much delicacy as possible he must show her the high reputation he had gained abroad, and the opportunities now open to him for distinction. He had writ-

ten two or three letters upon the subject, but had destroyed them as soon as written. Writing was too cold a medium to suit the enthusiasm of his chivalric temperament, and he would speak. Once, twice, thrice, he had gone to her house for the purpose of making a declaration; but he found himself each time stupidly dumb, and went home provoked that he should have allowed himself to appear to so great disadvantage in Mary's company.

"I am, then, more agreeable than Mrs. Saunders?" said William.

"You like to be complimented, I see, and I will gratify you. You are extremely agreeable," said Mary, smiling and bowing low before him, "and never more so than at this moment, for I was near falling a victim to the blues. Your cheerful countenance has put the odious ogres to flight; for one ray of such sunshine as lights your face is death to them."

"Are you sincere, Miss Staunton?" said William.

"As sincere as you are when you pay pretty compliments to ladies. *I* have heard you! But do not look so very, very much disappointed. I will do you the justice to say I think you more agreeable than any gentleman whom I have met since my return from Europe; but you must remember I have not known you very long; a better acquaintance I trust will only confirm my present favorable impressions."

"*You* may feel that I am a stranger," replied William, "but to me, Miss Staunton, you seem the friend of years."

At this moment a carriage stopped before the door. Mary turned to the window. William stood by her side. The blood rushed violently to her heart, and swelled it to a painful degree. Everett Root alighted,

and held open the carriage door. Mr. Stanley followed him, bearing in his arms the fragile form of his darling child, whose parched lips and lustrous eyes sadly told the ravages of a fearful disease.

Alice had heard how kindly Mary had prepared for and desired her coming. That *she* had not loved Mary Staunton was the only sin that lay at the door of her little heart, and fervently had she longed to live until she could see her once more and ask her forgiveness.

"Who are these?" inquired William, surprised at Mary's agitation. She had not seen Alice since she was taken so ill at Marvel Hall.

Oppressed by contending emotions Mary's heart almost ceased to beat. She looked in Mr. Sutherland's face, and taking his arm whispered in a stifled voice,

"Be so kind as to allow me your support. I must go to the door to meet them. They are old friends."

Joe had seen the carriage, and opened the door before the bell rang. Almost overcome by the effort she had made to return to the home of her loved uncle, Alice lay listlessly in her father's arms and looked like an angel fast departing to the spirit land. Mary leaned heavily upon William's arm, and advanced to meet them. Alice smiled, looked in her face, and reached out her little slender arms towards her.

Like one petrified poor Mary stood motionless and gazed upon the wasted figure before her. A strange whirl of dreadful thoughts oppressed her brain, and accusations in tongues of fire seemed issuing from every member of that frail form, and then all was dark and lost to her sight. Hepsey, assisted by another servant, took the fainting girl and carried her to her own room.

Alice was at the same time gently laid upon the couch which Mary had assisted in preparing for her. Her father and Everett stayed by her side for several hours and watched the beating of her changing pulse with tender solicitude; fearing the effect which this new trial might produce upon her failing strength.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Wealth surrounded Mary with every luxury, and left, it would seem, not a wish ungratified, and society offered her its brightest attractions. Sunny friends of prosperity crowded around her; gifts and adulations were showered upon her by sycophantic admirers, and many hearts were offered her during the first season of her return to New York.

"There is Miss Staunton, the heiress," was heard in a whisper in every assembly the moment she entered. In the eyes of the world Miss Staunton was a favorite child of fortune, to whom life must be a paradise. But alas! this gilded veil concealed sorrows that lay deep, and that could only be alleviated by the consolations of her holy faith, and the religious zeal with which she devoted herself to her father's happiness and the care of her little charge, Alice. The love she bore this suffering child brightened her path of duty. In her society she found true peace.

Summer passed, and winter came, and bright sunny days of summer had come again, and still Mary watched faithfully, lovingly, patiently, by the side of her little invalid. Since Alice's return Everett's visits had been regularly paid, and were always spent by the side of his patient. Mary remarked how anxiously she watched for his coming, and with what an earnest welcome she

greeted him; and how the bright light of her deep blue eyes departed with him, and how often she sank into a pensive reverie when the hour passed and he had not come. Mary seldom disturbed her, or inquired the cause of her sadness. One day Everett had said, "Good morning, my little friend," to Alice, and had talked pleasantly but reservedly with Mary, and then left to continue his professional calls.

"Will you think me very troublesome, dear Mary, if I ask you to draw my chair to the window?" said Alice.

Mary drew the chair before the large window of her room and opened the blinds.

"This fresh air is delightful," said Mary. "The warm sun will invigorate my little pet. I do so hope that you will soon be well enough to ride out. Let me draw this cushion a little more to the right. There, that is better. I fear I hurt you, darling. Are you in great pain, dear Ally?" Mary saw Everett pause before the window and take off his hat. Alice's eyes followed him till he was out of sight; then she slowly shook her head, and laying it upon Mary's shoulder put her arms around her neck.

"I am afraid I am very ungrateful, Mary. With all your love and care I am not happy. Is not this very wicked?"

"Your sufferings are great, my dear," said Mary, "and depression is one of the symptoms of your disease. You must not blame yourself for it. It will disappear when your health is restored."

"Do you think I can ever be well again, dear Mary?" inquired Alice.

"Doctor Root told me yesterday that there had been a consultation of physicians upon your case," said

Mary, "and that a remedy recently discovered for affections like yours had been proposed, which they hoped would restore you. My unworthy prayers shall be offered for you and you must join me, Alice. Let us believe; for God alone can cure you. That our prayers will be heard I have strong faith, if we ask it for the sake of Him who suffered even unto death. Pray that the means used may be blessed, dear Ally, and leave the result to God." A cheerful, hopeful smile, lighted the sick girl's face, and she raised her head, and wiped the tears from her cheek.

"Then you will be happy, dear, dear Mary. I know you will, and that will make me willing to live."

"I will try to be happy, Alice."

"And Everett will be happy too," said Alice. "Why are you so cold in your manner towards Everett, Mary? He is very good and kind. He thinks you avoid him because you dislike him. Why do you, Mary? I am sure you can't dislike him, and I have told him so."

"There are reasons for my reserve towards Doctor Root, which I cannot explain to you, my dear. I appreciate his mind and goodness and prize his friendship as highly as you can. Let us not speak on the subject, Alice; it is painful to me. Perhaps the time will come when you will not blame me."

"May I ask you one question, Mary, without offending you, and without making you think me selfish? Tell me, are you engaged to the old gentleman in England from whom you receive letters so often, and to whom you write so frequently?"

"No, indeed," said Mary, "what an idea! What could have put such a thought into your little head, you foolish child?"

"Everett told me that you were," said Alice. "I am so glad I can assure him you are not, for he has thought it the greatest pity that one so young as you should have given your heart to Major Trevalyan. I know he is good and kind, but he is too many years older than you are. Oh! I am very, very glad, *dear* Mary. You are still *my* Mary! You are *my Mary* now; and I love you more than any one else in the world will ever love you."

"Have you been jealous you little rogue, you spoiled pet? Have you been jealous of my dear old major, and cried yourself sick no doubt many a time when I was asleep and could not hear you, you foolish little creature? I have received many letters from the old major since my return home, and his letters have been a solace to me in my trouble. By a mysterious ill-fortune our correspondence while I was in London was interrupted after the first few days. I never received Major Trevalyan's letters after the first two or three weeks, and he did not receive mine I afterwards learned. But we have had an explanation on the subject, and I have looked forward with great pleasure to the arrival of each mail from Europe as you have noticed. He gives me full accounts of all that is going on at Hollygrove, and I, in return, tell him of my experience and my progress in my new life. If your little heart has been troubled let me give you consolation. Be assured that I will never *marry any one*. I *am* yours, dear Alice, forever yours." Alice kissed Mary again and again, and told her how very much she loved her, and how very, very selfish, she feared she would think her for having been so unhappy, but indeed she could not help it.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

One year had passed since the conversation related in the preceding chapter. During this time Mary has seen her little charge gradually improve, until the blush of health has tinged her cheeks. Mary's prayers, which were unceasing, had been heard. Her tender care and the new remedies resorted to, had been blessed. Well may she say that the dead has been raised to life again. Who can doubt the goodness of God?

Alice is now beautiful, lovely, gentle, and winning. It is not surprising that Everett seems to forget that he has ever loved Mary.

His attention to Alice has been unremitting. Mary has seen this, and how earnestly she has tried to drive him from her thoughts, and avoid his society, and to do all in her power to appear indifferent to him; but her efforts have been in vain.

She has prayed that she might cease to love him before she must see Alice his bride. Then would her sacrifice have been complete; then she could wish to lay her down and die.

The strong impulse and enthusiasm that marked her character in her childhood, and which, misdirected, led her to evil, now, under better teaching, sustained her in this heroic act of love and duty. She knew Alice

loved Everett, and she thought that Everett returned her love.

One bright sunny morning a carriage was waiting at the door. Everett had called, and Alice was preparing to ride with him. Mary fastened her shawl, tied her bonnet, and placed a moss-rosebud in her hair; then kissing her she desired her to hasten to him, for she heard Everett's impatient step in the hall.

In spite of the smile and pleasant raillery in which she indulged, Alice noticed there were tears in Mary's eyes.

"Dear Mary, you are unhappy! why are you concealing any thing from me, your own Alice? why do you cry, tell me? have *I* done any thing to grieve you?

"No, child; these are very foolish tears: don't mind them. Go, Everett is calling you. I hear his voice."

"You must not send me away, dear Mary, until you tell me what troubles you," said Alice.

"To-night, Alice—go now—to-night I will tell you. To-night when we sit alone. Good-bye, child—go now."

Alice obeyed reluctantly. Mary stood at the window and saw her seated by Everett's side in the carriage.

"How beautiful, how angelic she is!" she thought. "How could I have hoped to be remembered—to be loved—while there was such sweet fascination to lead him away from me?"

Mary went to her room and closed her door. She prayed long. At first there were abundant and bitter tears and sighs intermingled with her appeals to

Heaven. To relinquish forever the dearest affection of her heart seemed a sacrifice she could hardly bear; but at length the tumult within her heart ceased, and the storm was hushed. "It is I, be not afraid," was whispered in her ear. A calm and holy resignation lighted up her face. She murmured "*Thy will be done*,"—and gave up her heart's love. The offering was accepted, and Mary rose strengthened. A peace that indeed "passeth all understanding" succeeded, and Mary raised her heart in thanksgiving for the blessings of that hour. Alice came home with the glow of health and pleasure on her cheek, and entered Mary's room with a light step and a still lighter heart. She sat down on a low chair at Mary's feet and talked in an excited manner of the delightful ride she had enjoyed. "The air," she said, "was delicious, and Doctor Root was more agreeable than usual. Dear Mary, to-day Everett talked to me for the first time as if I were a young lady; and it was far more agreeable to my self-love, I assure you, than to be treated like a child."

"*Are* you not a young lady, Alice?"

"I suppose I ought to be," she replied, "but you have petted me so much, dear Mary, that I own I am a very, very child, am I not, though 'sweet sixteen?'"

Alice arose and walked to the mirror, took off her straw bonnet, and arranged her beautiful fair ringlets with more than ordinary care.

"Ah, here is the bunch of forget-me-nots Everett put in my bonnet. I'll put them in my belt. He will soon return, he has promised to dine with us, Mary. Are you not very glad? He picked these flowers for you. I caught him meditating over them, and asked of what he was thinking so seriously. 'I was seriously

thinking of sending these to Miss Staunton,' said he, 'but she is so reserved in her manner towards me I fear to do so. What do you think, Alice?' To tell you the truth I did not believe you would care for them, and I said, 'if you are in doubt you had better bestow them on one who will be sure to value them.' He laughed, and called me a fairy tempter, and put them in my bonnet. I will wear them at dinner to show him I was sincere. Why are you so reserved with Everett, Mary? I think he is pained by your indifference."

"Would you prefer that I should like him better, Alice?" asked Mary, while she gazed in the young girl's face to watch its expression.

"I wish every one to like him, he is so kind, so good, so handsome."

Mary put one arm around Alice, and held her hand upon her own heart to quiet its rapid beating. In a low and imploring tone of voice she begged Alice to speak freely and without reserve to her. "Do you love Everett, Alice?" she asked. "Tell me, tell me truly. Do not fear to confess it."

Alice looked puzzled and surprised by the question; and while the color of her fair cheeks deepened to a crimson, she replied after a little hesitation, "Do I love Everett? He has always been so very, very kind to me I cannot help loving him. He seems like a brother, Mary. I have loved him as a fond sister loves a brother. I suppose that is the way I love him, Mary; but I cannot tell. I never had a brother. I wish you loved him better, Mary."

"If I were to love him *very* much, Alice, would you not be sorry?"

"Sorry! oh no! why should I?" "If you were

to hear that Everett was going to be married, would you be happy?" asked Mary. "I might fear he would love me less; and I do not believe I would like that! Why do you ask me, Mary?" "There is Everett," said Alice; "I heard his voice. How soon he has returned. Pray go down to the parlor, dear Mary. I will come soon. I must take off my riding dress. Here, put this forget-me-not in your belt."

Mary had resolved to be a cheerful giver, and that neither Alice nor Everett should ever know the pain her heart had suffered in the sacrifice she had made; and that in future she would be more cordial in her manner towards Doctor Root. She met Everett with a smile that reminded him of olden times, and it gave her new charms in his eyes. The forget-me-not in her belt attracted his attention.

"Did Alice give you these, and tell you that I gathered them for you, Mary?" said Everett, after the first salutation.

"She did," replied Mary, "and she also told me that my reserve towards you prevented you from presenting them yourself. The little rogue put them in my belt, and desired me to wear them. To gratify her I have done so; perhaps it was a little piece of coquetry on her part."

"She knew the pleasure it would give me to see you wear them," said Everett in a serious tone. "I beg you will not send them in your next letter to Hollygrove as a trophy of your conquest." "I do not understand you, Doctor," said M[redacted]. "I hope you have not for one instant harbored the idea which I learned once took possession of Alice's mind, that I was engaged to Major Trevalyan!"

"Were you not engaged to him, Mary?" Everett inquired anxiously.

"Never! What reasons have you for supposing such an absurdity?" said Mary, amused, and yet half annoyed by the question.

"How grievously I have been deceived," said Everett. Then followed an explanation of the misrepresentation which Wallace Humphrey had made respecting the conversation he overheard at Hollygrove, and also his many subsequent malicious falsehoods. Everett, agitated and excited by the unexpected hopes that opened before him, made a declaration of his love, and told Mary the anguish of mind which he had endured, and which, at times, deprived him of all happiness.

"Everett," said Mary, "have you not loved Alice? Does she not love you?"

"She loves me for your sake only, Mary; she has been my confidant, my comforter, and would not allow me to despair. She will be happy if you will but return my love—a love that has been unchanging through the darkest hours, when there seemed not a lingering ray of hope to cheer me on. When I saw you so good and devoted to Alice, Mary, I almost adored you, and I have loved as few can love."

Alice just then came bounding into the room, but started back and withdrew when she saw the gravity with which Mary was pulling to pieces the beautiful forget me-not she had given her, and the anxious look with which Everett was regarding the process.

"Come in, Alice—" said Mary, "come in, child." Alice returned and approached them; taking Mary's hand though her own trembled she gave it to Everett, and then ran away as fast as she could go, leaving them to arrange the rest as best suited them.

That night, long after Alice slept, Mary wept for joy. The world again looked bright to her, and she wished she could make every one as happy as she knew she must be, with the love of such a heart as Everett's.

Not long after this momentous evening Mary and Everett stood before the Altar of one of the largest churches in New York. After the nuptial benediction had been given Alice was the first to salute Mary and wish her a long life of happiness; but there were tears in her eyes, for she feared that Mary could never love her so well again.

Doctor and Mrs. Root embraced Mary and called her their dear good daughter; and Mr. Staunton silently pressed his child to his heart, and turning to Everett said in a whisper—"Everett, treat her kindly." The joy expressed in Everett's face was remarked by all, and excited the envy of a score of Mary's rejected admirers who were present on the auspicious occasion. Alice took Mr. Staunton's arm and whispered laughingly, "*I'll* never leave you." He could only thank her by a warm pressure of her hand. Just then William Sutherland approached them with Isabella leaning upon his arm. Mrs. Marvel who was in the crowd pointed to them, and whispered to her neighbor, "*There* is another match; they will be married next week. It is a great catch for Isabella Sinclair. He is very rich and she is only a poor governess. She, too, is an old pupil of Marvel Hall; one of my best scholars."

"My dear Mrs. Marvel," replied the lady to whom

she was speaking "your interest in these children must be that of a mother."

"Oh yes! more than most mothers," replied Mrs. Marvel, putting the exact centre of her embroidered handkerchief to her eye.

THE END.

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